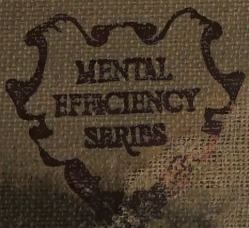
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MENTAL EFFICIENCY SERIES

SPEECH

HOW TO USE IT EFFECTIVELY

By XANTHES

ANNOTATED BY B. DANGENNES

AUTHORIZED EDITION

TRANSLATED BY
MME. LÉON J. BERTHELOT DE LA BOILEVERIE

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ANNOUNCEMENT

THE purpose of MR. B. DANGENNES, the author of this book, is to present to those of his readers who need a guide to the effective use of words a treatise on the subject which may serve to teach them how to utilize their powers of speech most impressively. It is his belief that the speaker who presents what he has to say in a clear, concise, and forceful manner is he who commands attention. In support of this belief, and for the purpose of aiding all who wish to acquire the art of speaking incisively and convincingly, he expounds the teachings of XANTHES—one whom he describes as embodying the rare qualities of a keen thinker and close observer with those of a man of remarkable judgment. As he develops his subject the Author of this treatise bears constantly in mind that it is as much the duty of an orator to please his audience as it is the purpose of a business man to convince his. It lies in the power of both to satisfy—gaining attention by sublimity of thought and elegance of expres-

sion, and carrying conviction by personal magnetism and that effervescence of the heart which is the natural stimulus of the enthusiast. Following the dictum of SENECA, we must feel what we speak before we can speak what we feel.

It was Dean SWIFT, the inimitable creator of the Land of Lilliput and the Travels of Gulliver, who told us that of all animals the chameleon, which is said to feed upon air—hot air, of course—has the nimblest tongue. But FRANCISCUS JUNIUS marveled at the truly astonishing activity of the human organ of speech. Said he, "The rapid flash of the eye can not be compared with it; the hand, the foot, the eye, and the ear become wearied by continual action, and require rest to recover their exhausted energies; but the tongue never falters or faints from the longest exertion." And it is in the use to which we put the tongue that we are distinguished from other living creatures. PLUTARCH reminds us that talkative people who wish to be loved are hated. When they desire to please, they bore; when they think they are admired, they are laughed at. They injure their friends, benefit their enemies, and do incalculable harm to themselves. These should remember the wisdom of SOLO-

MON—There is a time to speak and a time to be silent. "Learn to hold thy tongue," said that famous old exhorter Bishop FULLER, and continued, " Five words cost Zacharias forty weeks of silence." In speech our aim should be to show more wit than words. "Such as thy words are so will thine affections be esteemed; such as thine affections will thy deeds be also; and such as thy deeds so will be thy life," said SOCRATES.

In the course of the twelve lectures of which this book is comprized the Author treats of words as the mosaics of language. He discusses the art of always using the right word in the right place, and urges the scientific study of words. Next he treats of the relation of speech to ideas, urges the classification of thought, and compares the dominant idea with the thread on which beautiful beads are strung into a necklace. To be effective they must be presented in logical order. Then follow chapters on the art of enriching one's vocabulary; on eloquence; on oratorical debates and conversation; on how to master the art of speaking in public; on automatism and thought; on attitude and gesture; on speech as used in business and family life; on the power of the voice over the feelings,

and on many other allied subjects, such as the development of the voice, vocal changes, breathing exercises, gestures, and attitude, etc.

Speech is considered as the determining element of every human act, and as such the Author aims to teach the Reader how to make the most of it.

THE PUBLISHERS.

PREFACE

It was long before the days when Aristotle taught his philoscphy beneath the porch of the Lyceum—awakening thoughts which, called forth by the magic power of words, were changed into living pictures—that oratory was the tie which bound souls together.

Centuries have fallen into the vortex of eternity, but the art of governing, either the State or the individual, has developed a necessity for eloquence, by creating the need for the existence of conviction.

It is also, with deep interest, that we have received the translation of the works of an eloquent speaker, whose name was as yet unknown to us, for he was a man who lived alone, and a thinker rather than a popular orator.

The understanding which was inspired in him by the lessons that he received from all the constellation of great Greek orators, whose glory still illuminated his epoch, influenced him in the art of formulating his thoughts as well as in his expression of them.

Looking over his writings, one shall find valuable information, new points of view, and above all an exactness of judgment most remarkable.

He teaches us to win consideration by the prestige of speech, affording us at the same time the means of cultivating this priceless gift: eloquence.

At present, the number of public speakers increases daily, for by this means they are able to defend their interests and justify their convictions.

The complex industrial organizations, the unions, becoming more and more important, the syndicates, and even the ordinary state deputations, all are seeking orators whose eloquence will be sufficiently persuasive to present advantageously their claims and to set forth the importance of their rights.

Every day reunions are taking place in which each person interested is allowed to offer his opinion or to explain principles referring to the general welfare of the people or to an individual claim.

Lectures are becoming more and more frequent. As in the olden days, those who cherish an idea are happy to have it appreciated by others and they understand that the most effi-

cacious way to accomplish their desire is to invite the public to listen to the development of the subject.

But nothing is more disastrous than an idea which is inadequately defended, unless it be a rightful claim, inexactly stated.

It has also seemed to us most interesting to expound the principles of Xanthes, which were inspired by the orations delivered by the ancient philosopher, on the banks of the Ilissus, and also by the teachings of those who made this period famous, for these principles initiate us into the exquisite delicacy of that art which was glorified and immortalized by the ancient Greeks.

B. DANGENNES.

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LESSON I

WORDS AND LANGUAGE

Words are sounds, combined with divers vibrations of articulation, whose association produces in our mind, by force of habit, the appearance of the object which is designated by them or of the sentiment which they are intended to express.

This representation is thus more or less exact, according to the nature of the word which recalls it.

Certain words only awaken a confused reflection, little calculated to impress itself upon the mind.

Others, on the contrary, are veritable torches, illuminating with a vivid light the subject which they are ordered to present to our imagination.

"In the beginning of the world," says Xanthes, "primitive man was contented to imitate the language of the animals.

"This observation furnished them with a considerable number of imitative words, which, in time, were changed into syllables.

"The needs of existence, then very limited and always the same for every one, insured the repetition of these syllables, which very soon became for men of the same race the distinctive mark of their special affinities.

"These same sounds were used to designate the same objects, and this effort was the first manifestation of the union of mental and material life.

"Later, the necessities of existence were increased and the field of imagination was enlarged; man was no longer contented to imitate the sounds which the animals produced.

"The sound of the waters, that of the wind, the murmur of the brooklets, the rumbling of the thunder, in a word, all the impressions which came to them from without were unconsciously received and imitated by them.

"In time, these inarticulate cries, these disjointed syllables were either united or separated in various ways, so as to form a variety of syllables better adapted to the mentality just coming into existence, and rendered this union or separation absolutely necessary.

"Words were thus created.

"These primitive elements of language became little by little the gestures of sensibility.

"Men who had at first found only cries to express needs essentially material came to realize the necessity of interpreting their sensations.

"This interpretation confined itself at first to purely physical impressions.

"Suffering, well-being, were the first themes.

"And then the day came when the need of sympathy, which reigns in the heart of all men, took possession of our far-away ancestors.

"To experience joy or to suffer pain did not suffice them.

"They wished that this grief might be attenuated or that this joy might be increased by the sorrow or the joy of others.

"We must understand that this sensation was at first very vague, for the need of sympathy and of consolation can only be awakened in the soul of those who can think.

"The instinct of primitive man, on the contrary, was that which urges the wild animals to seek for the solitude, where they may die alone, and which incites them to hide their agony from the world.

"But separating himself farther and farther from the animal, man conceived the desire for a sympathetic environment and he invented

words to express his grief, in order not to be alone in the realization of it.

"An undefined need of sympathy and protection was being born in his heart.

"For similar reasons, he sought to have his companions share in the joy which he felt, and, little by little, the words multiplied under his tongue, became more agile, in proportion as it was better and more frequently exercised."

This opinion, which Xanthes holds in common with the most celebrated sociologists, is confirmed by many observations, which it is possible for each one of us to make at his pleasure.

We are more inclined to believe that it was true that prehistoric man imitated animals when we analyze the violent emotions which are common to both, and when we find an absolute similarity of manifestation.

Fear calls forth a cry—nothing more.

Violent pain makes us groan, without the sounds emitted being articulated in syllables.

Impatience or anger impels us to allow unconscious grumbling to escape from us.

In a word, all expression of excessive emotion, even in the ultra-civilized, resembles the manifestation of these same violent sensations among the animals.

More than this, the spoken word is indeed the expression of a longing for sympathy, since we do not use it in solitude. It is well understood that it is not a question here of people with unbalanced minds who, in order to strengthen their thought, and to formulate it in words, utter it aloud.

Language is the association of these words, united in order to form a collection of pictures, whose cohesion, more or less perfect, strengthens or weakens the force of the representative figures.

"One day," says Xanthes, "a man went to call on Plato and asked him what was the difference existing between words and language.

"The philosopher, without replying, pointed with his finger to a plaque hung on the wall representing a goddess with her attributes.

"Then, rising, he went toward a large vase filled with colored stones and, picking them up in handfuls, let them fall through his fingers in iridescent cascades.

" 'These,' said he, 'are the words or the materials.'

" 'And here is the language,' added he, showing the plaque, which was nothing more than a mosaic of a most delicate workmanship.

" 'These stones,' continued the philosopher, 'are only the elements indispensable to the completion of a picture like the present one.

" 'They are to the reproduction of a face what words are to the oration.

" 'Taken separately, they present only a minor interest; when the eye observes their color and their form, and this observation is allowed to be registered as thought, the part played by the stones is finished; one has scarcely time to enjoy their variegated scintillations for more than a moment.

" 'If, however, they are combined by a skilled artist, they can produce a masterpiece.

" 'Manipulated by an unskilful hand, they will form only a combination without meaning.

" 'If placed side by side by a child they will represent a naïve and confused picture.

" 'Distributed by an artist whose taste is questionable, their colors will be mutually repellent, instead of blending in one harmonious whole.

" 'The same is true of words.

" 'If these scattered stones can become a work which will be passed down to posterity, words cleverly grouped and chosen by a talented orator will produce orations which will be known and appreciated by future generations.' "

And Xanthes adds:

"There is still another point of comparison between the words and these stones:

"According to the fancy of the artist, these scintillations from the stone can produce forms which recall beauty or imperfection, flowers or monsters, a clear sky or a forest of trees bent over nearly to the ground by the ravages of a violent storm.

"Words—they also are called upon to represent different sentiments, according to the manner in which they are used.

"These words are to language what the tiny minerals are to the artist's production, and oftentimes the whole success of an orator depends, not so much upon the words which he uses, as on the manner in which he employs them."

It is an error to endeavor to find a natural relation between words and things.

It is certain that each race of people has constituted a vocabulary according to its conception of sound, which has some analogy with harmonious imitation, but, most of the time, there only exists an evanescent relation between the articulated sound and the idea which it represents.

If it were otherwise, there would be only one language, which would be universal.

The signification of words is, therefore, always arbitrary.

"Similarity, indicated at first by general terms," said Xanthes, "little by little became defined by special terms, defining not only the species, but each individual of the species.

"However, the fact of designating a thing by the term which characterizes a class of things, to which many individuals equally belong, always indicates ignorance or great mental simplicity.

"There are also many definitions for each species, as there are many words to express a sentiment.

"There are also certain words which can be qualified as possessing the power of reinforcement, for they permit of employing different expressions, whose enunciation renders more distinct the picture that we wish to image.

"It does not suffice that an orator should have an exact conception of his subjects; he must be able to make it tangible to his hearers.

"To understand and to see distinctly is well, but it is not all; we must present the subject of our observations by description in such a manner

that those who listen to us participate in the inspired revelation.

"Too many orators are like a man who would gesticulate in absolute darkness and then be astonished that his gestures were not perceived.

"Before attempting to call forth in others the contemplation of that which pleases us, we must surround with light that which we want to have them admire.

"And light, for an orator, consists first in the choice of words.

"These words should be exactly adapted to the nature of the object in question.

"The search for the expression is of paramount importance to the quality of the speech."

And now Xanthes gives us the following typical commentaries:

"There are," he says, "pompous words, which seem to wear a mantle of royal purple.

"Others, clanking metallic sounds, seem to us as marching warriors clad in full armor.

"There are those which are furnished with a two-edged blade.

"A few form the drapery which poetry throws over the crudities of sentiment.

"Certain words awaken visions of purity; others depict struggle and bitterness.

"There are those which flash like lightning, diffusing the light of which they are made all around them.

"But, in order that each one of these words should produce the intended effect on the minds of the hearers, it is indispensable that they should be placed where they belong, and should be given their full value by surrounding them with words less important, whose mission is to sustain and to strengthen them.

"At times they should also be prepared.

"At others, on the contrary, it is necessary that they should burst forth with a jet of flame, without the possibility of their having been foreseen.

"It is also well to conceal them under the cover of other words less significant, as a sovereign might hide his brilliant robe under the humble toga of the philosopher.

"Certain satirical words should give the impression of blows from a whip, while words of indulgence will flow as from a spring of benevolence.

"All the science of language is found in this," concluded the philosopher; "words taken separately have little significance, but the grouping of them makes a whole formidable or graceful,

terrible or salutary, severe or tender, according to the mosaic of the oration."

These precepts, which in our day, could serve as examples to orators and lecturers, Xanthes is going to develop for us in the following chapters.

We have confined ourselves thus far to the grouping of the values which relate to words alone; that is to say, to the elements constituting language.

One is too much inclined to confound these two appellations.

Thus, as Xanthes teaches us, they represent two things absolutely distinct.

We are side by side with people every day who cultivate purity of language, without for that reason possessing the science of speaking.

It is a gift, say indolent people. And this statement seems to them sufficient to free them from the work of research which their indolence repels with horror.

Sometimes it is really a gift, but most of the time it is a result, obtained after a series of studies rigorously reflective and analytical.

As to those who possess the art of speaking and disdain delicacy of language, it is not possible to criticize them severely enough, for their

defect comes neither from voluntary ignorance nor from the insufficiency of means; it takes shelter in mental inertness, which becomes a lack of vital energy and, if one does not react, degenerates quickly into an habitual atrophy of the will.

"Language," Xanthes says a little farther on, "may be compared to a beautiful tree, whose leaves are the spoken words which we have designated under the title of supports or auxiliaries.

"Its flowers are the words that we have described and which, luminous already of themselves, will borrow a special beauty from their environment.

"The branches of this tree personify sentiments.

"The trunk is the powerful thought, generator of interior movements.

"Finally, the roots represent the idea, extracting its substance from the depths of the soul, which in the form of a sap nourishes and strengthens all other parts."

And the philosopher adds judiciously:

"If the flowers are not atrophied, and if they have not been allowed to become too numerous, they will produce magnificent fruits.

"But the majority of orations are like this symbolical tree; the profusion of flowers often impairs the quality of its fruit, which can only ripen if care has been taken to prune the branches when half-dead and to remove the sterile flowers which otherwise would absorb a part of the sap, to the detriment of the vigorous living branches."

In reading this understanding of the philosopher one can not help smiling, as one thinks of the flowery rhetoric with which many pedants like to overburden their orations, and, in spite of oneself, one admits that the recommendations of Xanthes could be the subject of much useful advice concerning our contemporaries.

Too much embellishment is always an obstacle to a proper estimate of the value of these accessories to a composition; the repetition of metaphors, by creating a great mental tension, causes instant weariness in the audience. In the midst of such rich flowering, the mind can hardly make a choice.

Scarcely does it believe its choice definitely established, when it finds itself attracted by the appearance of another object none the less brilliant.

This opulence bewilders it, makes it hesitate, and its attention finds itself drifting in the direction of a medley of things, which represents to it only a confused picture.

Let us add, in order to follow the comparison of Xanthes to its ultimate conclusion, that, among these many flowers the majority are sterile and leave no trace of their blooming.

We must conclude with the ancient orator:

"The orations which bear no fruit only represent, both for the orator and for his audience, a useless waste of the minutes, only too few, of which life is made up."

LESSON II

THE SPOKEN WORD AND THE THOUGHT

In order to make others understand us, we must first understand ourselves.

In the symbolical tree of which Xanthes has been speaking in the preceding chapter, we have seen that the *idea* was the origin of all development and that it alone fed the different parts of the tree of which the flowers were destined to produce the fruit of science.

"At the base of all discourse," says the old orator, "there is the idea, without which the spoken word would be only a useless noise.

"The idea precedes the thought, which is the sequence consistent with its analysis."

This includes many phases whose gradation we shall now follow with the philosopher.

"The idea," he says, "is presented to us at first in the form of perception.

"It acts upon the receptive faculties of our brain, before appealing to our understanding.

"This first period is that of emission.

"We emit an idea before thinking about what it is worth.

"At times it is so worthless or so denuded of common sense that we unconsciously reject it before it has had time to impress itself on the mind.

"At other times it is presented under a form which merits being fertilized.

"We ought, therefore, to oblige ourselves to consider it from the angle from which it appeared to us at first, by isolating it from all the parasitic ideas which do not fail to graft themselves on it.

"If the idea, thus confusedly perceived, belongs to the domain of things possible of realization, it will then be time to consider it from that point of view which will permit its perfect development.

"In order to accomplish the productive contemplation of an idea, it is indispensable that we should be impregnated with many kinds of knowledge.

"(1) That of its substance;
"(2) Of its form;
"(3) Of its essence;
"(4) The cause for which it was created;
"(5) The final cause.

"By the word *substance* is to be understood the matter of which the idea is made.

"The idea can refer to an object, to a person, or to subjects belonging to the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdom, etc., etc.

"It is, therefore, necessary from the first to be well imbued with the substance of the idea, in order to eliminate all thoughts which may distract our attention and cause it to diverge toward analogous subjects.

"The substance once properly defined, it will be in order to think out the form of the object which has aroused in our mind a feeling of perception.

"An energetic appeal to our recollections will be necessary in order to define the group to which this sentiment belongs and to determine afterward the difference existing between it and perceptions of the same order.

"A similar mental operation will be necessary for that which concerns the essence.

"It may happen that two subjects of the same form are of dissimilar essence, or perhaps of the same essence, their form and their dimensions presenting a certain diversity.

"It will afterward be necessary to establish the cause which has produced the idea.

"Lastly, one should delay the unfolding of the final cause, that is to say, the purpose toward which the idea is directed."

And, joining the example to the demonstration, Xanthes continues:

"We shall suppose for a moment that an orator undertakes to pronounce an oration to celebrate the virtues of a great man.

"The idea is presented under the initial aspect:

"Substance.

"The substance is that of a living being.

"The form: this living being is a man.

"The essence: this man was a Sage, or a valorous captain, a remarkable legislator, or a celebrated orator.

"The cause having produced the idea which has carried to the mind the present representation is the renown that this man has known how to acquire.

"The final cause is the desire to proclaim his virtues, by inciting his audience to imitate him.

"The final cause is sometimes mistaken for the initial cause, as the initial cause is the one whose purpose produces the movements determined by the mental operation.

"It is in reality the desire which one ex-

periences to cause others to share the admiration which we feel for the great man, which has produced the resolve to celebrate his virtues; but here ends the part to be played by the initial cause.

"This produces the movement which should lead to the desired end, but it stops before accomplishment in order to make room for the final cause which is the resolution of the achievement.

"This mental operation can be attached to the study of that which is called: the simple idea.

"Ideas are simple, when they are relative to one perception alone and when they do not awaken the necessary manifestation of corollary or divergent ideas.

"One is apt to consider as simple ideas those which form a part of a group so bound together that there exists little difference between them."

We are now going to listen to Xanthes as he speaks to us of the manner in which we ought to use our intelligence in order to attain the object which all serious orators pursue—that of influencing those who listen to them.

"That we may find the words which move them, one must first," says he, "allow the

thought to acquire absolute precision, which contemplation alone is able to give us.

"It is a question, therefore, of forcing the projection of thoughts to illuminate the idea that we wish to consider.

"From every point of view, it is wise to reject thoughts already enunciated and discust many times; we can not sufficiently enlarge the field of our observations.

"To give birth to a new idea, if it be within the domain of common sense, and can endure discussion, should be the ambition of the majority of orators.

"However, we must not forget that this idea can only have its whole value when it is separated from the mass of divergent thoughts which will not fail to weaken its superiority."

But Xanthes does not pretend to impose the idea upon us and consequently does not advise us to imbue ourselves with an atmosphere whose uniformity would not take long to produce the phenomenon known by the name of obsession.

He only advises us to mistrust the chain of ideas which, by a transmission scarcely perceptible, leads us very far from the subject of our meditation.

Again, he counsels us that, even while con-

templating the initial idea, we should consider attentively all the corollary thoughts which, far from turning us away from the initial one, will act in a salutary way on our thought, which they will magnetize and direct in the most admirable way.

He says that giving strict attention to the perfect analysis of the idea will determine far better than long study the all-powerful laws of persuasion.

However, in order to avoid the danger of confusion which corollary ideas always present for him who does not know how to discipline them rigorously, it is well to divide them into groups.

"The principle idea might be compared to the head of a large family.

"All the members of this same family are the offspring of this patriarch and all of them have some of his distinctive traits.

"However, in proportion as the generations multiply, the initial type grows fainter, and it will soon be necessary to stimulate the memory, in order to recognize some traces of it if numerous crossings have taken place in marriage.

"But if each one of the children has chosen a partner among those of his race, and if he has kept strictly from all foreign contact, the type

will be accentuated; the defects will stand forth in bold relief, and the good qualities will become an instinctive need, rather than a result of reasoning.

"However, every member of this family, individually considered, will have its own self-government, its own family, nearer to him than his brother's family and, altho living together, they form groups around the patriarch who gave them life.

"Every orator who wishes to be imbued with the idea should remember this symbol.

"Around the idea ('head of the family') other ideas group themselves, which are entirely its issue and owe their existence to it.

"To maintain these supplementary ideas far from all injurious contact should be the absorbing thought of him who desires to impress everyone with his oratorical power.

"The ideas presented by the orator are communicated to the assemblage by a sympathetic exchange of thought, which inclines the hearers to appropriate the thought of him who knows how to present it to them with oratorical power.

"The danger to be avoided is the diffusion of ideas which, starting from a single point, may diverge or be thrown into confusion."

To avoid that eventuality which young speakers are rarely capable of eluding, the old Greek advises us to make use of the method of division:

"In order," says he, "to escape the confusion of similar ideas, which crowd in a disorderly way around the principal idea and have no other effect than to weaken it, if they are not severely disciplined, the orator should think first of a main division, which he can separate afterward into as many subdivisions as there are different groups.

"In each one of these groups he will distinguish ideas appropriate to the development of his argument.

"This choice effected, he will proceed to the coordination of ideas.

"This signifies that he will remove all the ideas derogatory to it, and be contented to retain those which belong essentially to the theme that he wishes to develop, and that he will estimate their value according to the degree of relationship they bear to the initial idea.

"Then comes the time for classification.

"He will establish among these ideas a chronological order, and an order of importance.

"It is essential to know how to grade persuasive words, or to reserve them as arguments

admitting no answer, according to the nature of the discourse and above all according to the character of the audience.

"Certain ideas must be presented brutally in order to impress the assemblage; others, on the contrary, should be unfolded with great care that they may not offend any one's sentiments and that they may carry conviction to the minds of others, in the same manner as one pours a cordial, drop by drop, into the water which it ought to color uniformly.

"If the mixture be too suddenly made, the liquid having the least specific gravity will remain on the surface, and the perfect blending will not be obtained.

"When these different operations are finished, the orator's task will only have been sketched.

"Unless he wants to be engulfed by monotony, the orator should avoid dwelling too long on ideas of the same group.

"Without abandoning the main idea, he will call forth divergent ones which will be presented in the form of ideas belonging to another branch of the same family.

"And it will continue thus all through his discourse.

"Without abandoning the main idea, he will

touch on others which will confirm and reinforce it, at the same time adding a variety in the types of ideas, which are fundamentally identical, altho they present some differences as to form.

"But in order that these different groupings should not trouble the listener by their lack of conformity, it is necessary to create harmony between them.

"Here we notice that what is called the leading idea makes its appearance."

And Xanthes, who loves to illustrate his demonstrations by symbolic fables, relates to us the following story.

"A philosopher, of those who profest to be followers of Aristotle, was questioned one day by one of his disciples, who said to him:

"'Master, I have followed religiously your lesson on the art of speaking; tell me, I beg of you, what you understand by the words "leading idea"?

"'Do you think it indispensable to a discourse?

"'What is the nature of it, what is its object?'

"At this moment a little child was passing; on his bare neck a necklace of thin iridescent shells was clasped.

"The philosopher by a sign called to the

young boy and offered to him a small piece of money.

"'Give me this,' said he, pointing to the ornament.

"'My necklace?' asked the child in surprize.

"'Yes, your necklace.'

"The child passed it over his head and offered it with a questioning look.

"Suddenly jerking the string of beads in opposite directions the learned man broke the cord which held the pearly shells.

"They slipt down all along the broken thread and were spread out over the ground in a dazzling disorder.

"The child and the disciple beheld without understanding.

"The philosopher allowed them to reflect for a moment, then turning toward the child:

"'Pick them up,' said he, 'I return them to you.'

"'Then, I keep the piece of money, and I have the right to take back my shells?'

"Over the face of the old sage there passes a smile of success, and, turning toward the pupil:

"'This child,' said he, 'has just answered you:

"'Bound by the thread which held them to-

gether these shells formed a necklace; the thread once broken, they are only shells, whose usefulness no longer exists, no matter how many they may number.

" 'It is thanks to this thread that they become an ornament; it is thanks to it also that, saved from the chance movements of the crowds, they escape destruction.

" 'The leading idea is this invisible thread, binding together the ideas which, without it, would only present an ordinary interest, and would have no chance to instil conviction into the mind of those whom we wish to persuade.' "

And Xanthes adds:

"Too many orators construct their periods without paying attention to the idea which must connect them so that they form a magnificent whole, which is a perfect dissertation.

"It happens also that the leading idea wrongly conceived and insufficiently considered, is destroyed like the thread of a necklace; under such conditions we witness the most lamentable spectacle of an orator seeking to find his ideas under the strain of excitement and uniting them without distinct purpose in view, without art and without method, without profit to his audience, and to the great detriment of his reputation."

The idea is, therefore, essential to the art of speaking; without determining its position, language can not be exact, for it alone permits the search for expression and eliminates ambiguity, disastrous to all orations delivered by those who are not both thinkers and speakers.

LESSON III

SWORD OR SHIELD

"SPEECH," says Xanthes, "is the most effectual instrument of those who do not ignore the power of its influence.

"It can become at the same time an instrument of defense or a terrible weapon of attack.

"The great Demosthenes has proved to us that, above all, when it is a question of self-defense, one should not scorn the shield protector in order to brandish the sword, whose sudden flashes intimidate the adversary.

"From the shock of these imaginary swords, flames sometimes burst forth, destined to wound him who has advanced to the attack.

"Speech may be likened to a weapon brandished by a chief, who starts out impetuously to show his soldiers the road which must lead them all to victory.

"But to influence the heart as well as the body, the weapon of speech must be handled by a clever warrior.

"Victory does not belong to the feeble, and such never have power over the masses.

"Speech only becomes a real weapon when it is used by a man striking with a sure hand and not allowing his blows to be lost in useless ostentation or in unjustifiable attacks.

"When the phrases are the *résumé* of a thought strongly conceived, they can wound deeply, on condition that the thought is condensed in few words.

"The most brilliant sword-thrusts are those where one is the least hindered by useless feints.

"Also, conciseness can not be too strongly recommended to him who would be victorious in the oratorical combat.

"One of his absorbing thoughts should be to attack the weak point and not to waste strength in sterile efforts.

"Otherwise, harassed, breathless, and troubled because of the lack of success in his attacks, it will not be long before he loses his confidence.

"His blows, made without aim, will never reach his enemy with vital force, but, on the other hand, fatigue will compel him very soon to declare his thought, and he will fall under the steel of his adversary, if the latter be clever, strong, and exact."

From this interesting comparison we should draw, above all, the following lesson:

"Conciseness, if we can attain it, is a force of which we should know how to take advantage, and we must acquire if we do not already possess it."

Who has not suffered from being obliged to listen to long discourses, whose purpose disappeared each time we thought we saw it outlined?

To sum up debates by an argument which resolves suddenly the difficulty, as by a saber stroke, is the province of orators, whose mission is to propagate the ideas of defense; this is also the right of those who desire to apply the principles of a doctrine based on energy and the undaunted courage of conception.

"This use of the symbolic sword," says Xanthes, "recalls irresistibly the action of Alexander, who, instead of making a vain attempt to undo the knot which held the yoke to the shaft of the chariot consecrated to Jupiter by the son of Gordian severed it with one blow of his heavy sword.

"This act was mainly intended to create in the minds of others a favorable impression, for it increased the confidence of the superstitious

soldiers, who all believed in the oracle promising the empire of Asia to him who would separate the yoke from the shaft."

And he adds:

"How many clever orators have extricated themselves from a position not less complicated than was this knot of legendary fame, by using a decisive and definite phrase to disentangle the skein of sophisms and ambiguities.

"This was the principle talent of the celebrated warrior Phocion, whom our common master, Demosthenes, called 'the hatchet of his discourse.'

"This talent was so natural to him that he could not understand why it called forth such admiration.

"One day, during an extemporary speech, he had unfolded this special talent in such a wonderful manner that applause burst forth from the audience.

"Phocion then, turning toward his friends, simply asked them:

" 'Have I said some stupid thing?' "

How many speakers of modern times ought to be modeled after the Athenian general!

To the former applause seems like delicious honey, the distribution of which is their due.

Those speakers are rare who would think of asking their friends what is the cause of noisy approbation.

We should, however, render justice to orators whose talent is recognized and agree that by these the beverage of praise is rarely tasted without discretion.

Generally they are very critical of themselves, finding the reward for their efforts in attaining their own personal standard of excellence.

Is it with them, as with the Athenian general, that such applause astonishes them and that they can not accurately appreciate its sincerity?

Modern intellectual culture does not permit of doubts such as dwelt in the sterner souls of Xanthes' ancestors.

But he who wishes to perfect himself in this art should not rely on the praise, more or less sincere, of his audience; it is within himself that he must search for the principles of approbation which will be to him most precious to receive; and it is in himself again that he should find the wisest and most honest criticism.

"But," continues the philosopher, "it is not given to all who cultivate the art of oratory to find these trenchant and decisive words.

"There are very few among public speakers

who know them, in the first place, and far fewer who recognize that they should be uttered at the psychological moment.

"Must we then conclude that the use of these categorical phrases is a gift reserved for the privileged few and that the mass of other speakers will never know the triumph of a cause achieved by virtue of the word-sword, as a battle is won by some heroic deed?

"We should err if we thought that these men became leaders of the masses all at once.

"As it is with the majority of all our talents, eloquence is acquired when one has decided to win.

"It is by slow and rational study that we succeed in uttering those phrases which decide the situation or dangerously wound the adversary.

"Ideas should first be analyzed, as has been said in the preceding chapter.

"They must be studied most attentively, and we must be imbued with them in a definite manner.

"Then we must try to form an opinion from which there is no appeal.

"The moment will then have arrived to formulate it in phrases.

"These phrases must be carefully arranged, taking care to remember the events which they will depict with scrupulous accuracy.

"This done, we must take care to concentrate our thought upon all which is worthy of consideration and make the expression of such concentration as concise as possible.

"Above all, we should make our phrases short, resonant, and comprehensive as to the idea which they wish to convey.

"By the aid of the leading idea we should fit them well together that they may be coordinated without, however, overlapping, for phrases which encroach on each other always exert an unfavorable influence on clearness of speech.

"And now a special work begins.

"Like an essence which is reduced to that point where the strongest perfume is exhaled from the most concentrated mass of liquid, just so all the parts of a discourse must be so constructed that all useless words will disappear, to give place to that which we may term the quintessence of thought.

"Only from this oft-repeated study have sprung these phrases, clear and sharp as an ax, which have decided in a manner the fate of peoples."

IX.4

By reducing the theory of Xanthes to more modern and utilitarian proportions, we shall find a daily application of the advice which he gives us.

Yes, the decisive word is often necessary to resolve situations which the most enduring patience could not elucidate.

What family, what institution, what association has not its Gordian knot around which the weak ones strive in vain?

All of a sudden a man of energy appears; he judges of the situation at a glance; it is not his way to ruin his nails by untying this inextricable knot; his time is too valuable to be lost in vain attempts.

As with all the others who have preceded him, he leans over the obstacle, looks upon the tangle, tries to unfasten it, then reflects.

Long discourses and discussions take place around him and seem to be unending; he allows the prolix orators to become involved in their own arguments, and, before any one of them is able to anticipate his intention, he rises and with a telling phrase annihilates the useless conjectures by eradicating the difficulty, which he suppresses, at least in the form which it assumes at present.

Shall we say that he has annihilated it?

No, certainly not; but he compels it to be presented in a very different way, thus regenerating the field of thought and the results which are therein produced.

It is Xanthes who tells us:

"Conciseness is an element of success in every discourse.

"By conciseness, one must not understand shortness of duration; a discourse can be very long and at the same time very concise, if it contains many ideas, each one exprest in the fewest possible words.

"Those who do not observe this rule will never be anything but babblers, and in their hands the sword of speech will have the appearance of a jagged knife."

Passing on to the interpretation of the picture which composes the second title of this chapter, the old Athenian continues:

"Speech, in certain cases, is distinctively a shield.

"We have just said that the greatest orator of Greece did not consider it from this point of view in cases of defense.

"One can but admire the depth of this principle.

"The shield is a defensive weapon, above all; the blows ought to fall upon the shield.

"And to use only this means, when it is a question of attack, is to be willing to endure them all.

"The shield ought, therefore, to be used less to weaken the force of the blows than to intimidate the adversary by the invulnerability which it confers.

"One would hesitate to attack him who seems covered with scales which can not be pierced by a sword.

"And, as the bearing of a shield does not exclude the use of the sword, one might fear, in approaching the enemy sufficiently near to force him to show himself, that one was within reach of his sword.

"Every prudent orator ought therefore to wear a shield alongside of his sword-word composed of ideal thoughts that the adversary may consider as disturbing to his serenity.

"It is unwise to expose oneself and to allow the adversary to perceive the defect to be found in some part of the finest tempered-steel cuirass.

"The use then of the shield is valuable in this sense, that it defeats attacks and puts prudence on guard."

In less symbolical language, we shall agree with Xanthes that the orator who knows how to influence people by his reserve and his self-possession will produce an impression all the more that, under his apparent coolness, each one of his adversaries will desire to discover his plans, which each one will formulate according to the interpretation of his own fears.

Then it is always clever to pass oneself off as an invulnerable man.

This is one way of putting to flight intriguers and evil-minded people, who, fearing to break their arrows against a solid shield, will spare them, or at least will think it best only to employ them knowingly in attacking some one who appears easy to fight.

Let us add that great reserve always baffles an adversary, because it does not allow him to perceive any of our cherished projects or the sentiment which we conceal.

It is above all valuable in dialog, for it dissembles the ardent desire of realization, which enthusiasts allow to be apparent without calculating the consequences.

Strong in his apparent apathy, he who hides himself behind the shield of reserve knows how to present his objections or his projects with

such an impenetrable air that, not only his adversaries are unable to divine what importance he attaches to them, but he deceives them by leading them to think that he is completely uninterested in them.

Truth in the expression of indifference is at times so marked that, instead of obtaining concessions which they had hoped to secure, they reach the point where they formulate propositions tending to compel their relinquishment of the privileges which they had already acquired.

The shield, when used in public speaking or in parliamentary discussion, if we may believe the Athenian philosopher, can adopt a thousand forms and appropriate to itself many different names.

"For many," says he, "the shield may be represented by a general idea, behind which this class of people may take refuge in order to elude too pressing resolutions.

"Other orators proclaim principles whose sum total constitutes a magnificent series of tedious arguments.

"Still a few more invoke the ideas under whose influence reasoning is established.

"The majority take shelter behind high-

sounding words, such as: abnegation, virtue, patriotism.

"We do not wish to insinuate that they lack sincerity, for a large number among them are absolutely convinced of the solid foundation of their arguments, under the shadow of which they are entrenched; but the skill of the orator consists in compelling respect for this conviction from his audience and to make them share this conviction."

Xanthes insists still further on that which he calls the "shield ideas" and develops his theme as follows:

"There are some orators whose line of argument presents no brilliant side; these are not always the least admired, if they know how to insert the defensive idea into their orations, which will aid them in obtaining results, by employing the words which permit them to instruct inquirers, to confute opponents, or to establish clearly the truth, in other words, to strengthen their mental attitude by introducing the element of reasoning into all their discussions."

It seems to us that this last phrase recapitulates the signification of that which the Athenian means when he uses the word shield.

It is in reality not only the means of resisting the adversary's attacks, but it is also the ability to protect oneself, while we assume an attitude of wise expectancy.

The surest way to create confusion among one's opponents, is to dissemble one's thought.

This is, in a word, an artifice which permits time for reflection to exert its influence without the mental tension being perceptible to those whom it should escape.

It is also a method of allowing the power of reason to triumph, because the defensive in debate permits the orator to unfold his arguments with understanding, that is to say, when the adversary, disconcerted by his attitude, has exhausted the reserve force of the arguments which he has successively employed, in the hope of destroying this bulwark of defense which conceals from him the thought and the intentions of the one whom he is combating.

"Finally," says Xanthes, "a clever orator will know how to wield to his own advantage these two weapons, so different and yet both so indispensable.

"He will understand how to watch for the moment when his opponent, tired out, will get back his breath, to detach for a moment the shield

with which he has until now protected himself, and to draw the sword which enables him to change from the defensive to the aggressive.

"The greater part of the science of oratory lies in the judicious use of these two weapons: the sword and the shield.

"It is thanks to them that discourses or discussions will be freed from the monotony which characterizes parliamentary debates.

"Neither the most perfect reasoning nor the greatest eloquence can long hold the attention of an audience, if the diversity of the controversy does not arouse enthusiasm."

It seems to us that these suggestions should be closely examined by those who speak without antagonists.

How many political or religious orators, how many lecturers would gain by meditating upon the following lines:

"Moral lassitude is born of monotony," says a famous proverb.

This quotation should be engraved in letters of gold above the entrance to every auditorium where public meetings are held, as well as over the doors of salons where people assemble to listen to a lecturer.

He who understands how to wield the sword

properly, or to take refuge behind the shield of reserve will be sure to avoid the most serious cause of failure.

The popularity of an orator is usually due to his clever wit.

So there are some with exceedingly respectable talent who can not hold the attention of the public.

Others, far less versed in the art of oratory, succeed in charming their hearers to the extent of causing them to forget all their defects and only to recognize their brilliant qualities.

It is the latter who practise the art which Xanthes speaks of in this chapter.

Alternately sweeping down upon an adversary in a sudden attack or taking refuge in a defense full of reserve, they possess both the dash of the swashbuckler and the enigmatic charm of the thinker.

These orators force attention in spite of everything, and—in the words of a celebrated proverb —"Not only when they speak, but even at moments when they say nothing."

LESSON IV

WEALTH OF ELOQUENCE AND OPULENCE OF WIT

"THERE is," says Xanthes, "a very capricious bird.

"They are few who know how to keep him in a cage.

"However, he allows himself to be easily caught; he comes quickly at the sound of the pastoral flute, for he is far from being wild.

"He allows himself willingly to be attracted by the sounds which escape from an open window.

"He enters, listens for a moment to the trills of some musical instrument, then, as quickly as he came, he flies away to some other habitation in order to listen to the song of the lute.

"But there also his stay is momentary, and the sound of the human voice ringing out in a simple and sweet melody soon urges him toward a different place.

"He does not take flight, however, without the intention of returning.

"It is not unusual to see him reappear after these various migrations; but his presence is only evanescent, and he departs on the wing, from the moment he imagines he will be captured.

"At times, also, his flight will lead him very far from his native haunts; a very long time elapses before he comes back to the point of departure.

"But, most of the time, he does not soar away definitely, and makes brief appearances, followed by more or less prolonged absences.

"However, it happens sometimes that an air or a song will seem particularly agreeable to him; then he does not fly away from the grasp of one who seizes him gently and shuts him up in a cage, from which he does not try to escape.

"The reason for this is that this person knew how to unite all charms with (most important of all) all variety, which attract the bird *Attention.*

"This bird-fancier knew how, by the diversity of his songs, to compete successfully with the attraction of the neighboring lute or with the charm of the shepherd's flute."

And, continuing to unwind the thread of his story, Xanthes adds:

"But he must not fall asleep in the triumph of assured victory.

"If he neglects to interest the bird *Attention* by means of the manifold charms of his melodies and their infinite variety; if he permits this bird to listen to a one-chord and monotonous song, the bird, not being able to escape from his cage, will not wait long before falling asleep, a slumber from which silence alone will awaken him."

The capture of which the philosopher speaks is what, as a matter of fact, demands the greatest care and offers also the greatest difficulties.

To have "the ear of the public" always implies for an orator the constant effort to attract his audience.

Otherwise, like the bird in the story, their attention will escape and wander far from him who is striving in vain to recall it.

Now, faithful to his principle, after having indicated the mistake to us, the old Athenian is going to tell us what is the origin of it, by showing us how to combat it.

"Most orators," he says, "err through extremes.

"With some this disposition is manifested by an abundance of high-sounding words.

"Others indulge in an excess of ideas, which they accumulate without any systematized method and without giving themselves leisure to analyze them.

"Certain of them seek, above all, words which produce startling effects, but their multiplicity prevents the individual brilliancy of each one in particular from being appreciated.

"Their discourses resemble certain cuirasses made of sparkling scales, whose reflection is spread over them all, forming at a glance one blaze of light, seeming at a short distance to be one single sheet of metal.

"Generally both fail to arrest the attention of their audience.

"This accumulation of words, as also of ideas, ends inevitably in creating a weariness among those who listen which is evident by the flagging of the attention.

"To return to absolute simplicity of thought and expression will be the only method of remedying this lack of discipline.

"Orators to whom we listen with real pleasure are those who understand how to mingle serious and dispassionate phrases, words whose sonorous terminology gives the impression of the call of the trumpet bursting forth upon the theme of the flute.

"We admire the restful harmony of a rippling stream, but we can fall asleep easily to the murmur of its babbling.

"The rumbling of the thunder, if it continues, will have the same soporific effect.

"Neither waves clashing in violent shocks nor the wind blowing in a tempest would any the more have the power to keep us awake.

"But if the restful song of the brook be overpowered by the spontaneous roll of the thunder we should be startled and should wait for a return of the sound.

"We should do the same if a calm followed a storm and if the deafening tempest suddenly abated.

"In the lull which follows we should perceive the gentle murmur of the brook until, our attention being no more diverted by different sounds, we give ourselves up to the languor caused by monotony."

From this vivid description we should conclude, therefore, that wealth of eloquence, if it be continued indefinitely, becomes a barrier to the powers of concentration among one's hearers.

We should not, however, think that the disciple of the great Greek orators approves of lack of ideas and of poverty of terminology.

After having put us on our guard against the opposite extravagance, he advises us to study expression and ideas in the following terms:

"An orator should concentrate his mind on that which relates to opulence in words and on the habitual use of elegant expressions, but there should be no necessity for mental effort on the part of his audience to understand them.

"It is by attentive observation of this procedure that one will acquire the understanding of rhythmic phraseology and of moderation, the sure foundation of all oratory.

"This desirable attention to simplicity will not prevent the cultivation of strong and superb rhythm, which ought to be the object of all studies pursued by those who intend to speak in public.

"This moderation ought to be so applied that it will never conflict with outbursts of oratorical inspiration.

"It is after a dispassionate explanation and a circumspect and simplified discussion that words, overflowing with lyrical language, will have the power to make hearts beat.

"Noble and legitimate passion, revealing it self in magnificent phrases, will be aroused in others just in proportion as it compels atten-

tion and revives it to the advantage of a sentiment, the enthusiasm of which has not been weakened by preceding demonstrations.

"The heart is accustomed to generous impulses and never refuses to follow them, if they are skilfully elicited.

"The faculty of reasoning is not always possest by the masses, and the impulse arising from instinct should be considered as of vital importance to the passages of a discourse the memory of which gives them prominence even after the orator has finished speaking. The purpose is to arouse visions in the mind whose desired realization induces the action which it is wished to cause.

"This is why one should avoid lengthy arguments filled with pretentious words, which, repeated continuously, become a habit and destroy spontaneity of thought.

"It is most unwise for him who wishes to inspire enthusiasm to allow his auditors time for determining on their deductions at the same time that his arguments are being approved.

"The orator should not only suggest his argument to the audience but he should impress it on them.

"It should be developed in sub-divisions pro-

ceeding from the main branch and not in parallel branches, because, if there exists the least divergence from the source this deviation would not take long to be converted into a decided split.

"Now the object of every speaker is to instil conviction into the mind of those who listen to him, no matter what the subject of his discourse may be."

Xanthes then indicates to us the inherent disadvantages of too great a wealth of ideas.

"It is impossible," he says, "to warn an orator strongly enough against the danger of a torrent of ideas which, like tumultuous waves, make a disorderly assault upon the brain.

"The least disadvantage which can result is weariness for him and for his audience.

"Too many ideas can not find their proper place in a single address, and thus, if he wishes to elaborate them all, the orator finds himself forced to unfold them very concisely and not analyze them exhaustively.

"Prolixity of ideas is a common fault among inexperienced orators, who do not know how to take out of a speech all the superfluous matter.

"That is why they rarely succeed in having

their theories adopted, for conviction can not be created as to a thought too concisely developed and uttered without explanation.

"As we have already seen, it is not only well to reflect deeply, to classify, to coordinate, and to deduce, but these operations must be made intelligible to listeners, in order that they themselves may take the direction of them."

And Xanthes then shrewdly adds:

"It can even be positively stated that, in the majority of cases, he who has followed easily the argument suggested will not be long in believing that he has conceived it and will not fail to claim the glory of his perspicacity, if facts are able to confirm it.

"What greater success for an orator than to be able to create such an illusion?

"He will be all the more quickly rewarded, because every one is more disposed to be devoted to a cause when they believe themselves to be the originators of it.

"For all these reasons, it is most unwise to subject the intelligence of a hearer to gymnastics of too violent a nature.

"Besides, it must not be forgotten that too great an abundance of ideas hinders precision of expression.

"This exactness, however, is the basic strength of all public speaking.

"What must be absolutely avoided is weariness on the part of one's listeners.

"It is unconsciously that they must be attracted by the arguments unfolded to them.

"It ought to seem a coveted pleasure and not a prescribed duty for them to follow the argument of an orator.

"In order to accomplish this purpose it is, therefore, necessary to present the idea which one desires to have accepted as one would present a valuable object by placing it on a small pedestal in an empty room.

"One can not too strongly insist on this last point," continued Xanthes, who, combining his favorite argument with his teaching, cites the following illustration:

"Suppose, for example, that you want to have ten objects admired; would you put them pell-mell in a case, taking care to place this case in a room encumbered with useless trifles?

"He who should act in this way would unquestionably be looked upon as most stupid, and he need not be astonished if his knicknacks are only superficially appreciated.

"The clever salesman, on the contrary, will

take care to arrange each of these objects according to their value; he will place them separately in such a way that it will be possible to walk around them, thus being able to admire them from every side.

"He will be scrupulously careful not to litter up the room where he exhibits them with puerile objects, whose presence would distract the attention of visitors.

"The orator should take his inspiration from this example, if he desires that the thoughts which he is going to submit to his audience should be appreciated and valued as they deserve to be.

"He will take good care not to abandon his first idea for a second one, and then returning to the first quickly leave it again, to the advantage of the second.

"By acting thus he would do like the merchant who boasted of the profits of a statue, putting it down in order to take up a picture, the design of which he wanted to have appreciated, then as quickly seized again the statue and began to admire the outline of the arm.

"So well did he act his part of salesman that, once outside the shop, the buyer would be obliged to quicken his memory in order to recall

the merits of each one of the works of art he had seen.

"He would hesitate before deciding upon the perfection of a drawing, asking himself if this admiration ought not rather to be given to the statue, and when he would review in imagination the beauties of the latter, the outlines of the picture would be interposed between his recollections and the perception which he desired to evoke.

"We can conclude that, in all probability, he will purchase neither the one nor the other of these objects so inadequately exhibited and whose beauty was so unsatisfactorily described.

"Too many orators resemble these merchants.

"Some of them mass ideas in an indescribable disorder.

"Others present them simultaneously, scattering them pell-mell, so that the listener is obliged to undertake a real task in order not to unite the conclusion of one with the evolution of the other.

"Very numerous are those who allow them to be aggressive, so much so that, like the centaurs of the fable, they seem to have sprung from two different beings.

"There are also those who, as with blows

from a hatchet, overwhelm the public with arguments which they believe conclusive, and which, perhaps, would be, if they allowed time for them to be understood.

"But scarcely is the blow given when they deliver another without allowing the dazed listener time to get back his wits.

"There are those who join the wealth of ideas to opulent eloquence, of which we have already spoken.

"So completely do they accomplish their purpose that the audience, drowned beneath the metaphors, submerged by the flood of ideas, deafened by the blast of loud words, have only one desire: to escape this torture and to renew the experience as seldom as possible.

"How different is the discreet speaker who understands how to enclose the minds of others with the net tightened by his simple and impregnable arguments.

"He does not unfold more than one idea at a time, never abandoning it before he ascertains that all his hearers understand it and it is acceptable by each one.

"He will not despise abrupt phrases and harsh-sounding words, but he will understand how to use them so that they will lose none of

their effect, and will employ them in such a way that their appeal will be a sure incitement to conviction.

"Finally he will decide with certainty the moment when the attention of his public spreads its wings to fly away from the auditorium which he fills with the sound of his voice, and he will immediately seize upon some diversion which will retain it."

Would one not suppose that these lines, written some years before the beginning of our era, had just been published for the use of lecturers, who are becoming more numerous every day!

If these latter wish to be sincere, they will acknowledge that true success is not the lot of a redundant and inflated speaker any more than it will be the inheritance of a too-prolific thinker.

It belongs to him who understands varying his effects and caging the migratory bird, which all speakers would like to capture and whose flight few among them are able to arrest: Attention.

LESSON V

OF ELOQUENCE

If we believe Xanthes, there are two distinct kinds of eloquence.

"The one may be compared to the lightning which flashes and quickly vanishes.

"The other, like the fire concealed beneath the ashes, lies dormant a long time before the flame bursts forth.

"The lightning, however, does not always destroy the objects which it grazes. It happens sometimes that it encircles them and sinks into the earth, leaving them intact.

"The conflagration, on the contrary, has already half done its work when the flame bursts out, and most of the time it devours only the shapeless remains, having by this time spent all the force of its redoubtable dominion.

"Without underrating the first form, which at a critical moment can be an element of valuable assistance, we can not fail to admire the force of the other, for, at the crucial minute, it

reaches only those who are convinced, all ready to become fervent disciples.

"Eloquence is, above all, the power to persuade.

"It is also, at times, the means of attracting crowds and of deciding acts of heroism and self-sacrifice.

"However, in this last form it is not so often used.

"Impassioned effort and tender emotions possess only a relatively limited power in ordinary life, but the need of inspiring conviction exists in every step of the social ladder, and those who have the secret of developing it in the hearts of others belong to the most powerful race in the world.

"Heroic eloquence achieves results a thousand times more brilliant, but they are at times less definite.

"The state of mind, the surroundings, in a word, the environment, aid in reaching conclusions inspired by heroic eloquence; but, if this state of things be modified, the resolutions made in a moment of enthusiasm are often regretted and ill carried out."

And the old Greek orator, who is also a profound psychologist, continues as follows:

"Who among us has not been subjected to the influence of scenery?

"Should we not think that it is an admirable preparation for the conclusion of orations?

"Wise people who speak upon serenity amid the dazzling bloom of the flowers, under the blue dome of the sky, have they not a precious aid in nature?

"But when night falls and the tempest roars, the mentality becomes clouded and their precepts are in danger of losing their power of persuasion, at least in the case of adepts, who have been recently convinced.

"This is why we must beware of eloquence which borrows its power only from the magic of words which are adapted to the present situation.

"Less striking but more efficacious is the eloquence which adopts no artifice and derives no benefit from an abnormal situation.

"This form of eloquence is contented to interpret the truth, demonstrate it, and by the omnipotence of speech compel its admission by those whom it addresses."

According to Xanthes, eloquence of whatever kind should be inspired by three principal motives.

With the exactness which is his characteristic, he defines them as follows:

"The first motive is *justice*.

"All polemics ought to be based upon this motive.

"It can happen that an unjust principle, cleverly defended, may have a chance of being favorably received, if the orator be full of talent, but the fact is rare.

"The following are the reasons:

"The orator may be himself convinced, by reason of an argument whose point of departure is erroneous.

"In this case, he is sincere and, if he be persuasive, he will be able to convince his hearers of its veracity during a brief period of time, but this faith, resting upon error, will crumble in ruins simultaneously with the proclaiming of the real truth, and the disciples of the orator will not be long in expressing that scorn which this false doctrine deserves.

"'We do not wish to refer to the case where the orator recognizes the weak foundation of his arguments and yet he insists on presenting them either from a feeling of vanity or because a question of self-interest influences him to take this attitude.

"But falsehood fails to impress an audience; such arguments almost always overshoot the mark which it is intended for them to attain; like arrows shot too violently, they pass beyond the target at which all public speakers aim, and which is called persuasion.

"On the contrary, at other times, phrases which are uttered with too little conviction stop half-way before reaching the minds of the listeners, and, like arrows deprived of force, fall without accomplishing any results.

"It is, therefore, indispensable that he who speaks should be persuaded of the justice of the cause which he is defending."

However, Xanthes foresees the case where a desire for the good or protection of humanity will influence an orator to argue in favor of a cause which he knows to be unjust, and he expresses himself thus:

"One may object that many men of recognized talent, have argued against their own conviction by proclaiming the innocence of a guilty person, whom they were called upon to defend.

"However, many among them have succeeded in convincing the judges of innocence which they knew did not exist.

"This assertion is true, and so many famous

examples confirm it that there is no possibility of a doubt as to its truth.

"But one must not forget that these men who defend crime are moved to such action by a very noble sentiment: the desire of contributing to the redemption of a conscience and of a soul.

"The beauty of the purpose makes them forget the error of the motive; they are not insincere when they are pleading this innocence, because they are only thinking of the future redemption of him whom their oratorical efforts will be able to save from well-deserved punishment.

"The desire for justice is often confounded with that of redemption."

We will not insist on the truth of this opinion, which might be that of a contemporary, because every day we see the example of eminent lawyers who give the support of their talent to acknowledged criminals, in favor of whom they know how to use pathetic accents, making a fervent appeal to indulgence with which every generous heart is filled.

The second motive, according to Xanthes, is destination.

"Before everything a discourse to be eloquent should have a definite aim.

"Whether serious or frivolous, real or vision-

ary, this purpose will be exactly outlined in the mind of the orator; otherwise, his orations proving nothing and not interpreting a definite theory, it would be difficult for him to direct the attention of his hearers toward an obscure conclusion which he himself would find hard to demonstrate clearly."

After some explanations concerning destination, we find the following comparison so striking for the careful scrutiny which it displays.

"If you propose to some friends to make an excursion, before replying they will begin by questioning you about how much time it will occupy and what is the object of the change.

"They will want to learn how long it will last, of the reason for making it, and to know what acquaintances they will be able to make.

"If the length of the journey projected should exceed their strength, if the obstacles seemed to them too difficult to surmount, if the route seemed to have no attractions, if, in fact, they thought that they could not derive any special benefit, they would surely refuse to accompany you.

"It might happen, however, that some among them might join you at the outset; but if they found you an incompetent guide, stopping at

all the uninteresting wayside places and choosing the long and monotonous roads without knowing exactly where they lead to, they will not hesitate to leave you, either to pursue their own way or simply to return home.

"It is the same with the orator who misapplies the science of destination.

"His audience follows him at the beginning of his discourse, but as soon as they perceive that the effort to do so is in vain, they are less and less interested in his lectures and finally refuse to listen to his arguments which lead to no conclusion, and in the course of which he becomes bewildered and unable to solve his problems.

There is, according to Xanthes, yet a third motive, whose cooperation is indispensable to all public speakers: the principle of beauty.

"The quest of beauty," he says, "is the desire to please and to charm while giving information.

"The trifling signification which these words sometime make should not be attached to them in this instance.

"Beauty resides in that which is; a thinker will know how to discover it as well in that which is most humble as in that which is magnificent.

"This sentiment, at times ideal, at others puerile, is always essential to a discourse, in order that all aridity of style may be eliminated.

"It opens up to the mind unexplored horizons and permits us to develop the most abstract subjects without being diverted from the study by the difficulties which it presents.

"The worship of the beautiful does not eliminate these abstractions, but covers them with splendid flowers of speech."

And, resuming his usual method of instruction by means of illustration, the old Athenian master continues:

"A route will always seem less fatiguing and less wearisome, if we can stop from time to time and gather flowers, and if we have the certainty that each steep path once climbed will lead us to the discovery of glorious horizons.

"We shall have more courage to undertake a new ascent, if we begin our journey beholding wonders that we have admired and with the hope that we shall see others equally beautiful at the first turning."

And he concludes:

"Those who are to be pitied are they who do not know how to discover the beautiful and have only the fatigue of treading the pathway which

presents no ideal and is not illuminated by the inspirations of memory."

This philosophy can not be too much admired, because it is for those who wish to apply it the sure means of enriching the mind without causing that repugnance which the accumulation of difficulties never fails to create.

This is the secret of many discouragements, of many discontinued studies, and is also the explanation of the deserted aspect of those halls, in which many orators have been heard whose merit however is indisputable.

But just as Xanthes says, it is not everything to be able to assemble companions for a journey, we must be able to relieve the journey of its difficulties or at least to meet them courageously by awakening in them the hope of compensation at the journey's end.

One must know how to interest them also, from the very beginning, that they may forget their weariness.

One thing absolutely necessary is to present a definite aim.

Who among you, at the moment of starting on an excursion up the mountains has not looked up at the sky and thought:

"If it be foggy, I shall not start, for on reach-

ing the summit I shall not be able to distinguish anything, and I do not consider it worth while to impose on myself useless fatigue."

Young Alpine travelers sometimes make such an attempt, but they are very careful not to repeat it.

This is why so many men whose scientific knowledge and talent are recognized preach in the desert, imitating thus the celebrated apostle, but less successful than he, because they fail to win disciples.

The young students who have followed such a guide have been so disenchanted by the uninteresting trip, so uncertain as to how it will terminate, that they have eluded an invitation to make a second one. As to the others, those who know, they take good care to keep out of the way.

"A mistake quite common," says Xanthes, "is to imagine that eloquence consists in redundant phrases, in a superabundance of words scintillating with wit, closely packed like the arrows in a quiver.

"This ambitious phraseology has nothing in common with true eloquence.

"The latter, far from indulging in preten-

tious words, endeavors to frame thoughts in a concise and graceful diction.

"The sentences should never be overburdened with innumerable incidents, nor with repeated parentheses.

"Clearness and simplicity are the first requisites of eloquence.

"A discourse should, above everything else, give the impression of precision and logical sequence.

"Homogeneity is also to be considered, for it is due to the harmony of structure that every element of the discourse tends toward the same purpose.

"This leading thought can be diagnosed under harmonious phrases, but it should always be uppermost in the mind of the orator; he who, even for a moment, loses sight of the conclusion of his discourse, risks being lost in fatal digressions which will rob him of the undivided attention of his public.

"Now we have already stated how fleeting this is and how difficult it is to reclaim it once it has been diverted.

"This is why young orators can not be sufficiently cautioned against allowing their attention to be distracted by stopping to look for a

word or to explain an argument which has momentarily escaped them.

"In the first instance, the forgotten word should be replaced by a synonym; were it less harmonious or less applicable, one should not, however, neglect to catch the passing word, even if it only approximately performs the function of the one which has escaped.

"The same holds good in discussion.

"However, this case would not occur, if the discourse were prepared beforehand, as it is proper that all discourses should be.

"But if in spite of everything this case should present itself, the orator, instead of losing his head, and what is worse, of allowing his public to perceive his confusion, should resolutely abandon his search and adopt a new line of argument.

"During this time and in order to conceal his embarrassment, he repeats his last phrase, as if he wished especially to engrave it upon the mind of his hearers.

"Then he will make a pause.

"This pause is necessary, when it does not exceed a few seconds.

"In all discourses this pause is the sign which marks the termination of sentences in writings.

"After a pause, the listener is advised that a

different argument, if not also a new theme, is going to be submitted to him, and his attention is immediately quickened.

"All these artifices will permit the lecturer to construct another sentence, which should always be linked to the preceding one and tend, as have all those which he has previously prepared, toward the conclusion of which he wishes to convince his audience.

"Another sure means of recalling attention which is vacillating is to understand how to direct the effects of opposing ideas.

"As in the vocal score, so also in the contrasts of a discourse, antitheses are indicated, as impressive effects.

"One can not repeat too often that it is necessary for an orator so to hold the attention of his audience that it can not be diverted from what he is saying.

"The qualification of being eloquent belongs to him who keeps possession of this secret.

"It is also most necessary that, by all possible means in his power, he should try to be worthy of possessing it; to him who lacks the power of persuasion infringement of another's rights is permissible that conviction may penetrate the mind of his audience."

We shall explain in a subsequent chapter in just what the scientific composition of a discourse consists.

We shall also consider the subject of imitation at length.

But in this lesson, devoted solely to eloquence, we shall only quote from the pages of Xanthes that which relates to the art of speaking and should be translated by the following words: the art of convincing.

It is from this point of view only that we shall consider the following lines:

"One of the principal defects of the inexperienced orator is to deliver his speech too quickly because he thinks it too long—his only idea being to gain time.

"This happens generally at the moment when he who is speaking perceives signs of weariness in his audience.

"Wishing to destroy the impression of length, the novice speaks with such rapidity that he forgets the art of shading his delivery; now monotony renders everything interminable, and this manner of procedure excites impatience in an audience.

"If this is produced, the young speaker must suddenly introduce a phrase which will produce

a striking contrast with the preceding one in the method of operation.

"For example, if the phrase exprest is of a negative character spirited language must be employed.

"If, on the contrary, it was to interpret austere subjects, a directly opposite method should be used; the orator picturing to the mind of his audience some beautiful vision, thus quickly dispelling the unhappy impression and winning anew their unflagging interest."

Now Xanthes is going to speak to us of innumerable kinds of eloquence.

"Outside pretentious discourse," he says, "there can be named many kinds of eloquence.

"That which is magnetic and slightly pungent, altho apparently caressing.

"That which, dictated by an imperious conviction, is the result of an inspiration, whose purpose is revealed in the form of a priesthood.

"The familiar crudeness of common sense, exprest in terms so exact that each word carries weight and leaves its impress upon the hearers, can be considered a form of eloquence.

"Irony is also at times a kind of eloquence, if it does not adopt a satirical style and if it avoids being coarse.

"But in no case should it descend to triviality."

Xanthes teaches us also the art of not being uselessly eloquent.

"The secret of eloquence," he assures us, "consists also in the art of choosing for one's subject such a theme as will interest the public who are called upon to consider and criticize it as well as the orator.

"Lyrical language should only be employed with a perfect knowledge of its application, and there are many cases where it would be most inapplicable and out of place in a particular part of one's discourse.

"On the other hand, there are circumstances where the orator has only a chance of success when he responds to the expectations of his hearers, that is to say, if he be sufficiently enthusiastic and keen.

"However, there is a principle from which he should never deviate:

"In any case, the need of using a brilliant phrase should never make him forget the art of composition.

"No matter what the public may be before whom he is called upon to speak, he must never fail to remember the degree of perfection which

he should attain in the most notable oratorical contests.

"And no matter how ordinary the mentality of his audience, he must never forget this principle:

"Very few people have sufficient instruction to claim the right of scorning the approbation of the ignorant."

LESSON VI

ORATORICAL RIVALRY AND CONVERSATION

THE art of public speaking changes its name according to the length, the importance, the nature, and the kind of subject.

When it defends a public interest or when its purpose is to explain fundamental truths, it takes the name of *discourse.*

Uttered by him whose vocation is to create a love for religion or to define a dogma, it is entitled *sermon.*

Less solemn but always appealing earnestly to morality or prescribing a line of conduct to disciples or students, it adopts the name of *oration.*

Explaining the principles of a science to those who desire to be initiated, it becomes a *lecture.*

When this *lecture* is of less importance, less ceremonious, less abstract, better adapted to the understanding of the masses, it is a *conference.*

The speech made in defense of an accused person, for the purpose of demonstrating his innocence or to attenuate his guilt, is a *speech for the defense.*

All these different ways of speaking in public are classed in the category of oratorical competition, that is to say, contests between eloquence and conviction.

All these different forms of the art of speaking have as an object to penetrate to the soul of man by means of persuasion.

It is also the purpose of the infinitely more frivolous art of chatting, which comprises equally many classifications, the principal ones being:

Chat;

Conversation.

Chat is a voluntary application of oratorical faculties placed at the disposal of ideas whose importance can vary from the grave to the trivial.

Conversation is a statement verbally exprest, of a less exalted character; it is the narration and the expression of different opinions on unimportant daily events, which are related without any attempt to analyze the philosophy of them. When the talking assumes a more learned aspect, when thought and psychology become

an important factor in the conversation, then they become *dissertations.*

"If the method of Aristotle be followed," Xanthes says, "the discourse can be divided into three classes, which permit of numerous subdivisions:

"The judicial;

"The deliberative;

"The demonstrative.

"The judicial division extends from the bare statement or the simple admission of a point of law to the most impassioned plea on behalf of a defendant, for whose benefit it is wished to create a doubt in the minds of his judges.

"The deliberative division is adopted by those who, entrusted with interests of a public nature, struggle to obtain laws beneficial to the people whose promulgation shall exert a happy influence on the prosperity of the nation.

"The demonstrative kind relates to education in all its forms: the worship of the gods, the cult of science or that of morality."

No matter whether the discourse be delivered for one purpose or another, whether it be destined to vindicate the guilty or to prove a great truth, neither can escape the law of construction.

The orator who refuses to submit to it would

only give expression to confused ideas resembling those children's games whose separate pieces only represent a picture when they are put together in the order in which they were primarily arranged.

We shall therefore allow the old orator to speak, he who can so vividly recall the greatness of those immortal orators living in the last centuries preceding the Christian era, whose undisputed fame has lived throughout the ages.

He says:

"Discourse may be divided into ten parts:

"Invention;

"Preparation;

"The exordium;

"Argumentation;

"Proposition;

"Division;

"Proof;

"Refutation;

"Peroration.

"Invention, while not springing directly from the art of speaking, is, however, the foundation-stone of the magnificent structure known as perfect oratory.

"Invention is the idea around which discussions are grouped.

"It is also called 'the subject', and on its choice depends so often the success of the discourse.

"If the invention belongs to a melancholy subject or one already well-known, it demands extraordinary talent in order to awaken interest.

"It is besides exceedingly disagreeable to discourse on a subject already often discust, because one is in danger of committing plagiarism, for, altho one believes that he has exprest original ideas, he has in reality only repeated opinions already set forth by preceding orators.

"Except in the case of rare moral courage, one will be more influenced by convictions already declared, and the work of invention will be increased by the absorbing desire to escape the slavery of strange impressions.

"One will also have to struggle against enthusiasm of long duration and against deeply rooted beliefs, which give the appearance of a debate to the presentation of simple arguments if they do not conform to those arguments which the public has already admitted.

"Invention, or the choice of the subject, is therefore, according to this understanding, a primordial question for the orator who desires to be heard and . . . . to be sincerely applauded.

"There are two methods of interpretation:

"Graphic preparation;

"Mental preparation.

"The first offers the advantage of permitting an orator to coordinate his ideas and to classify them in the order in which he wishes to present them.

"However, we can only recommend this method for those who speak from notes.

"Certain orators write their whole discourses; then they re-read them, correct them, perfect them, and learn them by heart.

"This can only be profitable in the case where they are absolutely certain of the fidelity of their memory and of the absence of interruptions.

"Imagine an orator of this kind, losing his memory and thrown out of his course toward the abyss of ridicule, unable to find the proper phrase which will extricate him from his embarrassment.

"This danger, terror of all public speakers, can not befall those who resort to the mental method, for they acquire, by the use of the latter, a subtleness of wit and a skill in supplying the requisite thought that the first will never understand.

"One must also remember that the constant

thought of being at the mercy of interruption detracts from an orator's magnetic and persuasive powers.

"And the discourses committed to memory are always uttered with less spontaneity than those where the orator unfolds his arguments in a moment of intense feeling.

"In a word, one can not think of the waste of time and strength which the written method necessitates without a feeling of disapproval.

"It is also an additional burden for the brain of the orator, who is required to unite the written expression of his conceptions and the picture of his mental perceptions.

"Let us remember also that ideas thus imprest upon the public are effaced from the memory as quickly as they are developed.

"Mental training is the method adopted by all great orators.

"Improvisation is rarely resorted to on the rostrum.

"It is almost always the result of a series of meditations, during which the subject on which one is called to speak in an improvised fashion, has already been examined and discust.

"Mental training is sometimes aided by having notes, but these notes are only ideas trans-

ferred to paper for reference rather than amplified conceptions, and are jotted down only to be consulted to refresh the memory at the opportune moment.

"Upon these notes the orator will build his discourse.

"At first he will *think it out*, awaiting the moment when his thought is freed from the chaos of hesitation.

"Then he will speak aloud his thought; he will interpret it by spoken words; he will demonstrate it by means of phrases.

"Every one knows the magic power of the spoken word.

"The orator will thus be able to apply the laws of auto-suggestion, by becoming impregnated with the idea which is imbued with living force by the power of the spoken word.

"This method of procedure is all the more efficacious because it recalls to the mind what one has heard, and is not only more advantageous but a thousand times more useful for the orator than the recollection of what he has seen or than the mechanical memorizing of words.

"This last method should be absolutely banished by the speaker who is concerned with the cultivation of true eloquence, for it is opposed

to all outbursts of genius and gives to extemporaneous speaking, of no matter what kind, the appearance of a lesson which has been committed to memory and then recited, more or less perfectly.

"Therefore, one who prepares a discourse should above all devote himself to meditating on it.

"As soon as he is absorbed in his subject, he should try to improvise on such parts of it as seem to him the best calculated to excite his inspiration.

"He should endeavor to present his idea in such a way as to have it fully appreciated and to foresee all the effects.

"He should strive to classify it by an exactness of expression, thus impressing the minds of others by the truthfulness of the representation.

"Then he should frame his picture in a beautiful and appropriate phrase.

"He should first say to himself, in thought, all the words which he is to repeat in public, then say them aloud.

"His chief object should be concerning the order in which he is going to place the problems which he proposes to solve.

"Classification, as well as form, is of inestimable value.

"The solidity of discourse depends always upon coordination.

"It is also necessary first to classify the notes according to degrees of intensity, at the same time endeavoring to arrange them in the order convenient to any desired change.

"Improvisation can be valuable only after the discourse has been first *thought out.*

"He who risks speaking on a subject upon which he has not meditated is in danger of forgetting what he wanted to say or of presenting prolix and illogical arguments."

Now Xanthes speaks to us of the different phases of public speaking, by giving us a knowledge and understanding, inspired by the great orators who preceded him.

"The exordium is the beginning of the discourse, the phrase by which one explains the necessity which there is to deliver it; it is the preparation at the opening of the speech.

"For a skilful orator, this is the sure way to attract the attention of his audience, for he will know, from the first words of his preface, how to arouse the interest of his public.

"The exordium should never be prolonged

for any length of time, for the patience of an audience desirous of knowing the details of the subject under discussion should never be too severely tested; disapproval would be manifested whose effect would be to lessen their admiration of the discourse.

"The expert and self-possest orator will pass rapidly over the few phrases of the exordium, in order to present the proposition.

"The proposition is the subject of the discourse clearly analyzed; it is the very concise and very explicit presentation of this subject, explained so as to have it understood by those who have come to listen and profit thereby.

"The proposition itself comprises many divisions, of which the principal is the narration.

"This phase consists in a brief but very detailed logical synopsis of the subject to be developed.

"This recital having been completed, the orator should proceed to discuss the explanatory principle.

"After this, he should announce the deduction, that is to say, mention the reasons which argue in its favor and those which seem to be against it, in order to state in explicit terms the relation between the two.

"Deduction is subdivided therefore into two parts:

"Affirmation;

"Negation.

"All judgment affirms or denies."

We shall not follow Xanthes in those considerations whose interest lies beyond the limits of this work; every one knows that an affirmation is a confirmation of expounded truths, while a negation is the refusal to admit them.

But these two forms of judgment call forth a mental operation which the Greek orator classifies as the phases of the discourse and which he calls the proof.

"The proof," he says, " is the sanction of the affirmation."

"It is not sufficient for an orator to say, that is true. If he wishes to make an impression on his public, he should submit to it arguments tending to prove that his conviction is based on such absolute truths that it is impossible not to be forcibly imprest by them.

"The proof, when it is applied to the demonstration of what is false, takes the name of refutation.

"It is sometimes easier to refute than to prove, but as the proof of the affirmative, the

refutation, in order to make a deep impression on the public, should consist of ratified arguments, resting on foundations established between the opposite conviction and the affirmation which one wishes to reduce to the non-existent.

"It must be agreed, if it be not a question of a self-evident truth, that a clever orator will always understand just how to state his propositions so that they will impress his public, whether he is resolved to prove the affirmative or to refute it.

"The peroration, or conclusion of the discourse, should never depend on inspiration.

"It always consists of a sentence, explaining the necessity for the discourse; this phrase should be so constructed as to embody poetic style and elegance of expression.

"We should not forget that the last words of a discourse resound in the ears of the hearer a long time after the last vibrations have ceased to agitate the etheric waves.

"These words ought, therefore, to be conceived and spoken in so expressive a manner that they stand out more prominently than all those previously uttered and that the audience may find in them the essential synthesis of the discourse, presented in just the way that the orator desired to have it appraised by them."

We shall refer again to the elements of the discourse which are subject to the rules of eloquence.

Eloquence may be simple, lyric, impassioned, or argumentative.

It is sometimes intuitive and evolves its most telling arguments from an instinctively logical mind.

Eloquence at times springs from an ardent desire to defend some noble cause and to win as many adherents among the audience as there are generous-hearted people.

But, in order that it may soar without being hindered by material difficulties, it should be subjected to close study whose character we shall designate in the next chapter.

We are now going to look over together the pages where Xanthes speaks to us of conversation.

This kind of oratorical art was the one above all cultivated by the ancients in the form of dialog.

"Speech," says Xanthes, "often drops the pretentious form of oratory to adopt the more simple one of conversation.

"This happens when the orator finds himself surrounded by thinkers who are his intellectual

equals and who are all capable of understanding him.

"It would be entirely out of place to employ the emphatic tone, chiefly because those whom he is addressing are already convinced of the truth of these same principles.

"Dissertation, then, takes the title of conversation; that is, each one in turn expresses his opinion or retorts an argument without troubling himself to observe the laws of eloquence.

"However, young orators, who devote much of their time to conversation, can not be too strongly urged to pay great attention to their manner of conversing and to avoid confusion of ideas. Conversation can be made an excellent preparation for the development of a talent for public speaking.

"Sometimes it adopts a familiar tone, when it concerns ordinary topics, which have only an every-day interest.

"Conversation becomes dialog when it relates to an opinion exprest by one party and an opposite opinion debated by another person.

"Many celebrated authors have collected these dialogs forming valuable specimens of this phase of eloquence, which tradition has religiously preserved."

The Athenian orator speaks briefly of the chat about which he says only a few words.

The chat is, in reality, quite a modern accomplishment.

It responds to our need of a medium for the exchange of ideas on the subject of art, of poetry, or of sentiment.

It is no longer a question of combating adversaries; one cares little about convincing them; we almost desire to find them of a different opinion, if only to see a new horizon loom up before us.

The chat is also a commentary on events which concern those who are assembled to discuss subjects of common interest.

Sometimes this chat is a narration of details about which each one thinks differently; these details are discust one by one, and are criticized adversely by some, praised by others, or even ridiculed by many.

The *causerie*, or chat, was highly esteemed in France in the seventeenth century.

The favorite place for meeting was the Hôtel Rambouillet, and it was there that great nobles, literary people, women remarkable for their intellectual brilliancy as well as for their high rank, used to gather.

Among these aristocratic souls the taste for daily talks was developed, whose tendency, at once refined, elegant, and profound, had, no less than learned criticism, a certain influence on the manners and literature of the epoch.

Some years later, the celebrated Ninon de Lenclos built a temple dedicated to *la causerie* in her salon in the Rue des Tournellas, where she reigned supreme for long years, presiding at the reunions where this oratorical art was held in veneration as the school of good form, good taste, and delicacy of sentiment.

Many years have passed since then; our feverish generation scarcely permits any longer of these harmonious gatherings of people to whom a strenuous existence is unknown.

Our contemporaries speak but they rarely have the time to chat.

However, there are some privileged circles where artistic occupations take precedence of material interests.

In those circles, people are not contented to speak; they chat, that is to say, they exchange ideas.

At times, as, according to the custom in ancient Greece, the philosophers discoursed in an atmosphere redolent with the perfumes of

gardens sheltered from the burning rays of a southern sun, there are to be found in our day cultured people who, in the sympathetic environments of a secluded salon, sheltered from the cruel glare of electric lamps, are delighted to talk about the miracles of science which they perform or of the beauties of the art which they prize.

That is the house where one may chat, a rare wonder, which the initiated conceal from the gaze of the vulgar crowd with jealous care, as a miser hides his treasures from public sight.

These are of Xanthes' opinion, who says:

"A beautiful thought beautifully exprest is worth far more than any jewel."

LESSON VII

HOW TO ACQUIRE THE ART OF SPEAKING

Before proceeding to what might be called the *mechanism of* eloquence, the young orator should be imbued with certain principles, the observance of which will insure his future success.

Eloquence is sometimes a gift, but it is more often an art; nature never will give that which study accomplishes, and really noble sentiments can only gain in beauty and value by being exprest according to the rules of rhetoric.

If, however, he who is destined to oratorical contests be naturally gifted, study will only serve to reinforce his power by directing and guiding the development of his natural gifts.

What he lacks intuitively can be supplied by disciplining and exercising those faculties which are defective.

There are very few people who, under the influence of a strong emotion, would not be capable of an ephemeral eloquence; but, if it

were a question of attack, of defense, or of proving with skill and authority, the majority would succumb to the difficulties of a task, had they not been smoothed by methodical study.

Another result of study is that one achieves the maximum of intellectual development with the minimum of effort.

Expert orators thus often save a waste of strength, while inexperienced speakers, ignoring the necessity of such economy, acquire a style of oratory which is involved and often devoid of any productive power.

It is possible, according to Xanthes, to divide study as applied to the art of oratory into two totally different sections:

The study of thought and its manifestation;
The study of mechanism or automatism.

In this chapter, we are going to speak of the first part.

It must not be inferred, however, that the two courses of study are to be pursued in the order in which they are named.

On the contrary, it is indispensable that they should march abreast; far from being harmful, this order permits one course to supplement the other and both to cooperate in creating the talent which characterizes the perfect orator.

"The principal defect of the novice," says Xanthes, "is the confusion or, to speak more exactly, the profusion of words, whose inaccurate mass just haunts his brain.

"He should then make a choice of all these verbal elements which assail his mind and should apply them to each object which they seem to define with perfect accuracy.

"From the moment that he becomes sufficiently master of himself to designate only one name for each object, the future orator will construct short phrases, in which this same object will be identified by a distinctive name, which belonged to it from the beginning.

"Following this, he will endeavor to enrich his vocabulary of synonymous terms and, in phrases a little longer, he will mention the same thing two or three times, each time using a different word.

"The practise of this exercise will render invaluable service to the orator if, later on, during a discourse, the word sought chances to escape him.

"This misfortune will happen less frequently to him than to such as have never familiarized themselves with this method; but, in case this

lacuna should be created, his habitual studies would permit him to fill it instantaneously.

"Another drawback, the terror of young orators, is the sudden failure of memory, which embarrasses them, makes them incapable of remembering the order of their discourse and the connection between the sentences.

"This loss of memory never lasts for any length of time, and, if the discourse has been well thought out, it will not be long before the mind of the orator regains its powers; but on this moment of oblivion may depend his reputation.

"It is therefore essential for him who wishes to avoid this shock to arm himself against all possibility of forgetfulness, by cultivating the art of improvisation.

"He should force himself to improvise a few short phrases every day, a different subject for each day.

"This habit will protect him from partial forgetfulness, because, in the case where the anticipated argument should fail, it would be easy to substitute another which the newly acquired habit would instantly suggest.

"A defect not less menacing is the difficulty of expressing a comprehensive thought in a few words. We have already spoken of the dangers

of prolixity and one can not be too careful to guard against them.

"It will, therefore, be well for the future orator to practise the condensing of a proposition, without for this reason diminishing the force of it.

"An exercise not less essential to intelligent oratory is the power to form a sentence and, by repeating it with a different kind of termination, leave nothing of the original phrase but the fundamental idea.

"For example, the following phrase being given:

"'Good deeds are the inheritance of good people,' only the following words will remain: 'good deeds,' and we shall endeavor to find a different attribute for them, but always in conformity with the spirit of the first phrase:

"'Good deeds are the fortune of the poor.'

"'Good deeds are only understood by the chosen few,' etc.

"Then, using phrases already constructed, one may have the comprehensive proposition followed by relative propositions, which will expand and amplify it.

"During all of the technical studies, the aim of the novice should be clearness of expression.

"It is not sufficient simply to understand oneself, for beside the complacence which each one is tempted to bring to bear on the matter, we can succeed in understanding our thought without the aid of words.

"One must, therefore, put himself in the hearer's place and repeat the words, regardless of their meaning, in order to concentrate only on the auditory understanding of them.

"In many cases, the speaker must admit that, if he does not comprehend his own thought, it would be extremely difficult for him to disengage it from the confused mass of words which complicates and conceals it.

"To create conviction, the first condition is the power of impressing other minds forcibly through the medium of word-pictures which attract and hold their attention.

"Confusion will always be the enemy of sympathy which must be established between the orator and his audience.

"When all these principles have been fully developed and faithfully observed, it will then be time for the young orator to begin the practise of speaking, by interesting himself in all that pertains to mentality, intelligence, and experience.

"One of his daily duties should then be the enlargement of his vocabulary.

"Poverty of terminology rarely accompanies wealth of mentality; poverty of expression, in any case, is a serious obstacle to the success of the orator.

"The acquiring of some appellations, some expressions, some new definitions will, therefore, be an object to be pursued daily.

"He will be able to make a wise application of them in daily conversation, there where liberty of composition, change of subjects, freedom of style permit one to use all kinds of rhetorical construction and to allow the imagination to soar to heights which the exigencies of public speaking do not allow.

"One of the subtle devices of oratorical art consists in employing certain typical phrases which permit the speaker to await the return of a thought which has momentarily escaped him.

"Let us hasten to remark that, these phrases being almost always of a trivial nature, we do not counsel the use of them except in the case cited above.

"However, the prudent orator will be the one who stores them in his memory, as we often set

aside objects of little value which may become necessary to us at some future day."

And Xanthes counsels the acquisition of these helpful phrases, which every public speaker should, in fact, have at his disposal, in case of need, such as:

"I should not wish to force upon you my convictions, however . . . "

"I should have liked to explain to you better than I did . . . "

"For to-day, I shall limit myself to submitting to you . . . "

"Is it necessary to insist further . . . "

"There are truths which it is impossible not to acknowledge."

In the case where an orator might wish to relate an anecdote, referring to a heroic deed of which he was the hero:

"I beg your pardon for mentioning a reminiscence of a personal nature, but . . . "

Or again:

"And, referring to this subject, I shall ask permission to recall a personal reminiscence . . . "

"However," adds Xanthes, "the cultured orator scorns these subterfuges and resolves to use them only in extreme cases."

Illustrating this teaching by example, he continues:

"Have you never seen experienced sailors embark on a dangerous voyage?

"Notwithstanding the staunchness of their ship, their indisputable skill as mariners, they rarely neglect to carry with them belts made of thin wooden plates, which they intend to use as life-saving appliances to support them on the surface of the water in case of shipwreck.

"These instruments serve only one purpose, that of allowing them to wait for a vessel to save them.

"Those who would scorn this succor would be considered imprudent, because this disdain might cost them their lives.

"The phrases of which we have just been speaking play the part of life-belts in a discourse; they are intended to prevent the shipwreck of the orator in the ocean of forgetfulness, and to allow him to await the return of memory or that not less desirable gift, presence of mind.

"Many talents," Xanthes reiterates, "are indispensable to the formation of a good orator.

"We have already warned him against a formidable enemy: diffuseness.

"He can not distrust too much the improper use of paraphrases.

"He should seek for elegance in the arrangement of his words.

"He must not make a mistake about this last qualification and confound elegance with affectation.

"Elegance of composition exists as well in a poetic or in a tender style as in virile exhortations or warlike declarations.

"It is the opposite of vulgarity; it can be cynical or enthusiastic, simple or complex, but it will always command attention if properly exprest."

The natural tone, attained by practising the exercises of which we shall speak in the next chapter, is the tone that all orators should strive to acquire.

In order to master it the old Athenian advises the following procedure:

He recommends us to take a very short and familiar phrase and to render it in the tone in which we would read it if it were enriched by commentaries.

"Let us take," says he, "the most ordinary phrase:

"*I do not know*, and let us practise saying

it with the intonation which the circumstances under which it is uttered demand.

"First negligence. We understand by this, that this question is of little value; I scorn to examine it closely; it is impossible for me, therefore, to speak of it, and we utter: *I do not know.*

"The slight regret, understood: I should have had pleasure to inform you, but *I do not know.*

"The grudge: How happy I should be to know the intentions which have dictated that act, but I have sought in vain: *I do not know.*

"Anger: And to say that at this moment perhaps they are concocting a plot against me, and it is impossible for me to defend myself, since *I do not know.*

"Grief: Perhaps my dearest friend has disappeared in this war, but, whatever I may have been able to do, it has been impossible for me to be sure of the fact: *I do not know.*

"Discussion: if I had been taught that art, I should be able to speak in public, but . . . *I do not know.*

"At first, it will be well to practise with the aid of the phrase understood, then it should be set aside in order to enunciate the typical phrase only, which must be spoken with the proper intonations.

"To observe scrupulously the difference in the shades of meaning is one of the charms of public speaking.

"He who knows how, through the medium of delicate transitions, to pass from elaboration to simplicity and from pathos to coldness will feel his audience vibrate under the influence of his words.

"The part played by the voice is also of paramount importance, and its transformations are always of a character to stimulate renewed attention.

"The change of register also indicates a distraction and breaks the accompanying monotony of the discourse.

"From the first syllable the voice reveals a modification in the feeling and in the idea.

"It is also well to practise underlining lightly a word which we desire to emphasize.

"Sometimes it is an entire phrase which we wish to place in such a manner as to give full value to the idea that it is intended to express.

"There are many ways of underlining.

"The first is to be found in the articulation.

"The other in the increased or diminished volume of the voice.

"Whichever may be the case, it is an excellent

artifice to strengthen the tie which holds the attention of the hearers."

Turning over a few more pages, we find advice concerning the first appearance of orators.

"From the time that the budding orator feels himself sufficiently equipped, from the moment he thinks that he can be a victor in the struggle against the thousands of enemies which stand upon the threshold of his career, he should take advantage of all his acquisitions.

"He should embrace every opportunity to speak in public and should not fail to do so, if only by making the most ordinary remarks, thus inducing discussions.

"The greatest harmony will always exist between his words and his thoughts; he will banish timidity, the mother of embarrassment, will take into account the advice of his superiors, and will endeavor to speak only wisely.

"When the moment comes to make his first appearance in public, he should first select carefully the place where he is going to speak.

"This is of paramount importance, because speeches should always be adapted to the place where they are given.

"In the open air, the voice will expand more easily, the phrases will be amplified, and the

rhythm of the sentences will be more vigorous.

"In a lecture-room, the shades of meaning will be more definitely indicated, and one will be able, from time to time, to abandon the pretentious style, to use a more simple and more natural tone of voice.

"It is, therefore, essential that one should be accurately informed about the place where one is to appear, and, if it be possible, to try the acoustics, for one must always guard against repeated vibrations, which, by prolonging the last syllable of each word, produce confused sounds in the ears of the hearers.

"The construction of the auditorium should also be considered.

"The public should be addrest in a language which it is capable of understanding, for he who expresses himself before an assembly of learned men or before illiterate people in the same terms would not be worthy the name of orator.

"The greatest masters of oratory have said this: 'He who speaks to the public is either its master or its slave, according to his powers of persuasion.'

"Therefore, one should not fail to observe the audience while speaking, in order to notice

its attitude and regulate the discourse according to the manner in which it is being received.

"If one notices the least impatience, one must not hesitate to sacrifice a few sentences in order to shorten the discourse and resort to the diversions of which we have already spoken.

"Under no circumstances should one become disconcerted, and, if it be necessary to reply to an antagonist, one should do so with perfect composure, by looking stedfastly into the eyes of his opponent and calling to his aid the remembrance of daily improvisations."

Such are the broad underlying principles of that which Xanthes calls the mental study of oratory; in the next chapter we shall study with him the benefits of the mechanical study which he designates as involuntary action, the study of which should go hand in hand with mental culture.

LESSON VIII

AUTOMATISM AND THOUGHT

THESE two words, which seem to contradict each other, find, nevertheless, their place in the mechanical education of speech.

In this kind of study, thought will be placed exclusively at the disposal of automatism, in order to obtain before all else the perfection of the instrument of speech.

"There is not," says Xanthes, "an artizan, however remarkable in the understanding of his art, who does not first think of the quality of the tools which he will be called upon to use.

"The most renowned sculptor could never awaken the soul of nature in the marble if his chisel were made of a soft metal and if it bent under the blows of the hammer.

"A painter could not picture all the colors of a landscape if he had only neutral tints at his disposal.

"Now, the voice is the instrument of him who desires to devote himself to the art of speaking;

he should make all possible effort to render this instrument perfect and, to accomplish this, must devote himself at the same time to the mechanical and mental studies already prescribed in the course of these pages.

"If he works conscientiously, he will have the joy of seeing this instrument not only being perfected but also being modified and made so flexible that it will obey the slightest suggestion."

And Xanthes adds judiciously:

"Is it not sufficient for an orator to be occupied in thinking out and constructing his discourse? Must he struggle also with a voice which is badly placed?

"The most pathetic things will seem dull, when uttered by a voice which has no warmth.

"The different shades of expression can only be interpreted by a voice which responds perfectly to the will of the orator.

"The training of this organ is, therefore, indispensable to him who is destined for the career of the noble art of emotional expression and the subtle art of persuasion.

"One of the first requirements in the development of such art is to learn how to use the respiratory organs without fatigue."

It is evident that the ideas of voice-culture were the same in olden times as they are to-day for all beginners.

The old Athenian enters into too much technical detail for us to reproduce here, but, from his dissertation on this subject, we shall cite the following passages:

"Many methods of breathing are used, the principal ones being:

"Lateral respiration;

"Deep breathing;

"Clavical breathing.

"In the first, the volume of air absorbed is, according to some experts, of considerable quantity. The entire thoracic cage participates in the absorption, and, the work, being spread over a large surface, the operation is rendered all the easier because it includes the uplifting of the ribs at the same time.

"Deep breathing is also called abdominal respiration, for in this method of inhaling the air is stored by the lowering of the diaphragm; the expanding of the ribs is less perceptible and the abdomen is slightly curved inward.

"On the other hand, in clavicular breathing, the abdomen is noticeably deprest, while the organs tend to rise."

Whatever may be the method adopted, Xanthes advises that the same position be maintained in putting it into practise.

Differing in opinion from our chief modern professors, he condemns the reclining position and he particularly recommends a special attitude.

"The arms," he says, "should be extended in the form of a cross, and the chest well expanded.

"The mouth must remain closed during inhalation, which should be made through the nostrils.

"It is bad for an orator to inhale with the mouth wide open; all sorts of difficulties result from such a method, the least of which is a sort of hoarse panting, called, 'the orator's hiccup.'

"In addition, this panting arises far more quickly if mouth respiration be employed.

"When the student is thoroughly trained in this exercise, the nasal inhalation will be so easy for him that he will use it even in speaking, which practise will lend to his discourse great uniformity of elocution.

"From the moment that the air inhaled through the nostrils has filled the lungs, great care must be taken not to expel it briskly.

"The greatest part of the benefit derived from this exercise, would thus be lost, because it is above all the exhaling which is important for the orator.

"From the moment when one feels that all the cavities of the lungs are abundantly supplied with air, one must retain during a few seconds this accumulated air and allow it to be exhaled as slowly as possible, while opening the mouth wide.

"During this last operation, the arms should fall slowly until parallel with the body and then raised again while one takes a breath."

According to Xanthes, the object of this similarity of movements is to develop and to restrain automatically the entire thoracic cage, thus aiding the function of respiration.

He recommends to us also the use of rhythmic measure for the exercise, using the following mental formula: Count five during inspiration, five during the pause, and five during expiration.

"But," pursues he, "these long breaths can only be a means of increasing the capacity of the lungs; for, in actual practise, the orator will have the time to renew oftener the necessary provision of air, which the necessities of speech will not permit him to inhale in sufficient quantity.

"However, it is indispensable for him to exercise his lungs, as a discus-thrower exercises his arm.

"By inhaling as we have just prescribed not with the upper part but with the lower part of the lungs, the speaker will store enough air to fill them sufficiently, and, if he exhales in the manner that we have just advised, he will not need to resort to those frequent respirations which fatigue the orator as well as his hearers."

A little farther on, we find still another valuable counsel.

"Take care," says the Athenian philosopher, "to wait until the provision of air is completely exhausted before attempting to renew it, for disregarding this advice will lead to spasmodic inhaling, and your discourse will become a mass of short, disconnected phrases."

And again he insists upon this important point:

"Visible effort is always a drawback, because it distracts the attention of the hearers, who fear a repetition of the movement which produced it and can not stop thinking about it: the discourse is thus deprived of the sympathy of the audience."

"Respiration studied scientifically," he says

again, "has a considerable influence on the volume and quality of the voice.

"If opening the mouth when exhaling be recommended, it is because perfect emission of a tone depends absolutely on the strict adherence to this rule.

"If in speaking we shut the teeth or the lips, the sound, hampered in its emission, will not be produced in all its fulness.

"Therefore we should practise daily the following exercise, in order to develop quality and especially evenness of tone.

"Being placed in the position required for respiratory exercise, we should inhale deeply through the nostrils and, opening the mouth quite wide, allow the breath to escape very slowly with the sound: *ah*. . . .

"One must use no force but simply permit the tone to slip gently away, at the time of exhalation.

"If it be spasmodic or tremulous, one must stop at once, begin the inhalation again, and try again on *ah* . . .

"When this first emission of the tone is full, rich, without any tremolo, without change of register, we pass to the vowel *o*, then to the other vowels, until the time when we become sufficient-

ly master of the voice to fear neither trembling nor break.

"Having reached this stage, we shall be able to produce only a few equal tones, and then we may pass to the following exercise:

"After a deep inhalation, attack the tone sharply, then let it die away gradually.

"Then quicken the inspiration gently and increase the volume of the voice.

"Practise several times this last operation during the time of exhaling; that is, increase and diminish the voice alternately; but never lose sight of uniformity and evenness of tone.

"Some people are afflicted with a very shrill voice, which detracts from the vigor of their discourse and renders ridiculous to some degree the development of grave or heroic ideas.

"It is a question of lowering the compass of such a voice by employing the resonant exhalation on a very open *ah*; this exhalation must be very slow in the beginning, and the tone should be produced without any contraction.

"The next step is to pronounce a word by dividing the syllables and by pronouncing each syllable without the least constriction of the throat.

"Later, entire phrases may be spoken, each

syllable being perfected by means of resonant exhalation.

"At short intervals, we should take notice whether the voice has a tendency to rise above the proper pitch, and in such a case there should be no hesitation in interrupting the phrase and beginning the sentence again on a lower tone."

After many pages of advice devoted to the rules for correcting faults of pronunciation, Xanthes speaks to us of the fine shadings of speech, relative to automatism and mechanism.

"I am presuming," he says, " that the orator has acquired the quality of voice and perfection of pronunciation which should be the object of all beginners; they should then think about arranging phrases in the most harmonious and intelligent manner, as to articulation and resonance.

"This is the moment to advance equally the literary and technical study of oratorical art.

"He must *think* of a phrase the fundamental idea of which emanates from a fixt principle or opinion.

"He should arrange his words, always remembering the rules concerning words and language, and, as soon as the phrase seems correct to him, he should use it as a theme for his exercises."

We can not help admiring the superiority of the old Athenian over so many others who make pure technique their only objective.

On the contrary, Xanthes wishes from the outset to initiate the beginner into the art of improvising and correcting.

He insists that the phrases for practise shall be constructed by the student, the thoughts all his own, and he demands that they shall be as perfect as possible, relative to idea and style.

This is what he terms automatism joined to thought.

He then advises that we should study this phrase as a matter of practise.

"The sentence once constructed, it will then be a question of pronunciation, observing closely all the gradations of punctuation.

We should pause between the words which, if enunciated without separation, would produce a confused impression.

Before an inversion of the natural order of words:

"The call of duty every one should obey."

Between the word duty and the words *every one* there ought to be an imperceptible respiration, and a slight but clear change in the register of the voice.

The first four words should be enunciated in a uniform tone, the following four words in a lower and firmer tone; to the ear of the listener, the first part should without discussion be the preparation for the second.

It is as if the orator were saying, "Do you know what is to be done when duty calls? Well, I am going to tell you: Every one must obey."

Another effect can be obtained by stopping to take a short breath, just long enough to indicate the place where the words have been omitted, in order to shorten the phrase.

"The beginning was happy and the success magnificent."

In order to make it perfectly clear that the word magnificent is related to the verb *to be*, understood, to express distinctly that it is a question of confirmation and not of attribution, it is indispensable that the phrase should be interrupted, almost imperceptibly, between *success* and *magnificent*.

Attention must be paid to the punctuation after the indirect object, and, every time it is a question of separating groups of similar thoughts; between prepositions, so as to separate collections of words preceding the conjunction

and, except the *and*, which immediately precedes a preposition.

The incidental also must always be preceded by a respiratory punctuation.

Before and after an adverbial expression.

After the vocative, if it begins the phrase; before and after if it is inserted between phrases.

Before and after a parenthetical clause.

When it is desired to enunciate something announced.

"He has practised the most precious of all virtues: goodness."

It is as if the orator said: "He has practised the most precious of virtues, and I am going to tell what this virtue is: it is goodness."

"All change of idea, no matter how slight, demands not only an oral punctuation," Xanthes says again, "but even a different inflection of the voice, accompanied by acceleration or retardation.

"For example, in this phrase:

"If one would believe certain philosophers, men do not understand how to utilize the energies which lie dormant within them.

"There must be punctuation after 'men', which should be pronounced with great precision, so as to indicate that it is a question

of the *men*. Or if certain philosophers are to be believed, we should lower the voice a little, thus emphasizing the final syllable, in order to have it understood that it is not a question of any thing essential; then this change of inflection will give a value to the rest of the phrase, which must be spoken in the same tone as the opening words of the sentence, by emphasizing very slightly but yet perceptibly the words to which is attributed a special value.

"We should therefore say:

" . . . . 'do *not* know how to utilize the *energies* which *lie dormant* within them.' The word *not* must be emphasized in order to attract attention to the much regretted omission; the word *energies* should be pronounced in such a way that it will be well understood that the phrase was spoken only with reference to this subject; after this word there should be a gentle and short inspiration, to indicate clearly and, above all to emphasize the character of the energies, which generally are unknown to exist, since they lie dormant.

"The change of subject will always be indicated by a pause, of which the orator will avail himself to fill his lungs, as he is advised to do when studying the preparatory exercises.

"As to the study of inflection, it is one of the most important, because the emotions of the hearer always depend on those of the orator.

"In order to inspire enthusiasm, it will be wise to practise, beginning very low and in a very unimpassioned tone, so as to allow the voice to rise and be able to develop its full resonance and volume at the end of the sentence.

"However, if this proceeding is very long in order to avoid monotony or, worse still, hoarseness or shouting, we should make use of a few words to bring the voice back to its initial tone (without, however, wholly accomplishing this end), that afterward it may rise continuously to the end of the phrase, in a sort of swelling undulation, which will destroy the monotony of the effort.

"The study of inflection should go hand in hand with the mechanical exercises, but it is indispensable never to neglect the one for the sake of the other."

With admirable common sense Xanthes adds:

"Can one imagine an orator occupying himself solely with his style and neglecting his voice? Or can one conceive of him as possessing a magnificent organ but ignoring the study of inflection and punctuation?

"The science of oratory is a whole which can only reach perfection if all its parts are cultivated simultaneously.

"The pupil should, therefore, never be allowed to recite during the course of his exercises phrases in which care for technique alone is taken.

"Emotion, the gradations of tone, and purity of style should also be the objects of his study.

"Automatism should never be practised unless thought directs its manifestations.

"The orator is called upon to think simultaneously of mechanical respiration, creation of ideas, style, volume of tone, punctuation, inflection, and expression.

"To acquire expression it will be well to begin with phrases expressing familiar sentiments.

"After having constructed these phrases as nearly perfectly as possible, one should enunciate them in the same tone of voice as would be used in every-day life.

"If success does not crown our efforts all at once, opportunities should be created to repeat them in the natural tone of voice, that is, when the demands of daily life will permit of this exercise.

"It is the usual mistake of all beginners to

believe that they are obliged to use the emphatic tone.

"Oratory demands, above all else, the use of inflections which are appropriate to the subject being treated. If we are speaking of patriotism, of conquest, or of battles, it will be time enough to seek after a lofty style and tone.

"But we should not forget that, if we misuse these, we shall produce monotony which is the forerunner of weariness.

"To recite with *precision*, to speak with ease, and know how to manipulate one's voice as an artist of genius uses a perfect tool, such should be the purpose of the orator relative to his utterances."

Already Xanthes has instructed us in the preparatory course in oratory; now he is going to divulge to us the secrets of gesture, without the study of which the finest orator risks losing the desired effect.

LESSON IX

ATTITUDE AND GESTURE IN SPEECH DELIVERY

"THE art of the orator," says Xanthes, "includes two languages:

"That of the voice, which appeals to the ear and the mind.

"That of gesture, intended to illustrate the first, and which appeals to the eye and to the intelligence.

"This latter may be divided into many parts:

"Gesture.

"Facial expression.

"Attitude.

"With very rare exceptions, the language of gesture should always precede the phrase, for which it thus prepares the way.

"Gesture is of great help to the orator who knows how to use it judiciously, not only to punctuate his phrase, but also to allow him to take a deeper breath.

"It is, in reality, during this first period of respiration that the gesture is generally made.

"The second part, which is that of exhalation, is also that of the spoken word.

"The abundance of gestures should vary according to the kind of language used, and especially according to the place where it is used.

"It is certain that a discourse delivered in the open air ought to be punctuated with more comprehensive gestures than would accompany the same phrases spoken in a very small room.

"The popular orator who is rousing his hearers to the defense of their native land can not use the same gestures as the sage who is explaining the mysteries of science to his pupils.

"Gestures made in a narrow hall and before a few people can sometimes be limited to facial expression.

"As with the voice, with style, and with speaking, gesture ought to be practised daily.

"Gestures should be slow or quick, according to the requirements of the phrase which the orator is emphasizing.

"Gestures should be dignified, graceful, without nervousness, without weakness, and, above all, without awkwardness."

Before studying gesture in its details, Xanthes bids us take precaution against the imperfections which must first be combatted; he speaks

also to us of the many orators who are victims of defects which retard their progress, and narrates to us on this subject a fable on which all orators should reflect, the story of the two laborers.

"A man had willed to his two sons two fields exactly alike, which for a number of years had not been under cultivation.

"Rye-grass also was growing in abundance there, and injurious plants were climbing over each other in picturesque disorder.

"The elder son began by pulling up all the weeds, then he plowed the field very thoroughly until he was certain of having dug out the last root. Finally, he piled them all up, burned them, and let the wind disperse the ashes.

"Then only did he begin to sow seed.

"The other son was of a more impatient nature. He was contented to plow superficially before sowing the grain.

"What happened? The field of the first one, freed from parasites which prevent the growth of the grain, produced a magnificent harvest.

"For the second, on the contrary, his pains were in vain, for the blades of wheat disappeared very soon under the growth of the invading rye-grass.

"He acknowledged too late the wisdom of his elder brother, and his negligence was punished by the failure of his harvest and the resulting troubles.

"This fable," continues Xanthes, "should be taught to all young orators, in order to make them understand how important it is that they should eradicate their defects before seeking to acquire the science of gesture."

We shall now examine with the Athenian philosopher some of these defects.

"First, exaggeration, which, if not used by a sublime orator when speaking of heroic things, will very quickly degenerate into awkwardness.

"And even then this exuberance must be momentary and demanded by the necessities of the situation.

"All useless gesture is considered exaggeration, that is, gesture not required by the requirements of the phrase.

"All vulgar gestures should be excluded, such as throwing the folds of the toga over the back or to lift them up as high as the shoulder.

"The hands on the hips, the fists in front, the hands crossed on the abdomen, all are just as many indications of negligence, and must never be allowed under any circumstances.

"Gestures which conceal the face should be avoided, as also those which interfere with each other without a reason; spreading the fingers or shutting the hand over the thumb, etc.

"Excessive mobility is always a defect, because it imparts to the listener the restlessness which seems to agitate the speaker.

"The repetition at regular intervals of the same gesture is equally unnerving for the listener, who, in spite of himself, awaits and fears the repetition; now this engrossing thought is most unfortunate for the orator, since it diverts for a mere puerility part of the attention which should be given wholly to his discourse.

"However, it would be dangerous to resort to impassiveness in order to escape this difficulty.

"Speakers who are contented just to speak do not take long to weary those who listen to them."

Xanthes, after having indicated the defects of gesture, turns to the explanation of those qualities which orators should cultivate:

"The first of all," he says, "is to establish harmony between the gesture and the word.

"Grace of movement would be out of place if one wished to express heroic deeds.

"On the other hand a vigorous gesture would

be ridiculous if accompanying the expression of a graceful thought.

"Ease is the quality the most prized and the one which is required of every public speaker.

"Variety of gesture ought to solve this difficult problem if allied to moderation.

"Nothing is more vexatious than this whirlwind of arms and hands, which to little purpose —and generally to no purpose—are raised, lowered, waved about. As a result of this, an unrest is produced among the audience, of which the most perfectly harmonious discourse will assuredly feel the effect.

"Gesture should always be free, refined, and never spasmodic.

"To obtain this result, or rather these results, daily practise is necessary.

"This is indispensable to students, but the masters have not been exempt from it, and, from Demosthenes to the most obscure orator, all those who have made a profession of speaking in public have devoted a certain part of each day to the study of gesture.

"This practise consists in a series of movements, which should be worked upon separately, in order to be able to apply them with ease at the desired moment.

"Here thought should intervene, as in the study of the voice.

"One should construct a phrase, and then apply the appropriate gestures to the best of one's understanding.

"When we have classified the series of motions which seem the most appropriate, the gestures should be studied separately, by analyzing the movements which produce them.

"We should adopt the principle of never allowing the gestures to be made from the wrist or from the elbow.

"The orator who speaks with the arms parallel to the body, moving only the wrist and the elbow, will give the impression of undeveloped awkwardness.

"To produce the desired gesture we should adopt a natural position, afterward trying to avoid all that is ungraceful or vulgar."

In order to facilitate this study the old orator classifies gestures in different categories, of which we shall cite first the two principal divisions:

Gestures of impression.

Gestures of indication.

The first interpret almost always sentiment alone; however, they may be employed to express

a physical sensation—pain, comfort, cold, heat, etc., etc.

If we are suffering from fatigue we shall stretch our arms; during great heat we shall wipe the forehead; under the painful sensation of headache, the hands will naturally be raised to the forehead; we shall dry our tears, etc.

To warn against danger, we shall stretch forth the arm, holding the hand bent backward to the wrist, the fingers in the air slightly parted.

However, many gestures can not be made during the discourse, to which they would give an aspect of vulgarity, bordering on ridicule.

It is for the orator to choose those which seem to him adequate to the subject which he is treating, and, after having studied them at length, to use them with the greatest discretion.

According to Xanthes, the movements of prayer and threat may be classified among gestures of impression, as also those of hate and love, of vengeance, of satisfaction, of discontent, of surprize, and of stupor.

All movements used to illustrate a material object are placed, according to him, in the second category, that of indicative gestures.

They serve to designate form, movement, dimension, situation.

"In the gestures of impression," he says again, "spiritual sensations can all be personified by the orator.

"Enthusiasm will be exprest by a movement of the arms in the air or projected in front.

"Discouragement by the arms in a falling position and a crusht attitude.

"Defiance, by the arms folded.

"Finding oneself called upon to protest in good faith or because of one's devotion to a noble cause, the hand will rest upon the breast in a sweeping gesture.

"Helplessness will be demonstrated by the arms held apart from the body.

"The arms at a slight distance from the body, the hand partly open in the form of a shell, the palm upward, expresses the gesture of welcome.

"The same movement, but with the fingers united and the hand horizontal, interprets the offering of something.

"Gestures of indication are more exact.

"The arms stretched, with the index-finger horizontal, is the indication of a rough dismissal.

"The same gesture, if the index-finger is curved toward the breast, will mean an appeal.

"In intimacy, the arm will be raised and the index-finger will be raised to the height of the face.

"The separation of the hands more or less remote will indicate larger or smaller dimensions, as to volume.

"Length is demonstrated, ordinarily, by pressing one index-finger on the phalange of the other; then it is drawn near the palm; the distance between the two points where the index-finger touches will indicate the length to be explained.

"The palm horizontal and the fingers separated with a sliding gesture indicate a flat surface.

"This same gesture, waved slightly, will mark sinuosities.

"To inspire repose, the hand may be gently moved up and down.

"To command the acceleration of a movement, the hand, reversed, must be put forward, and this movement repeated many times.

"The index-finger turned toward the ground indicates proximity.

"Separation is indicated by the arm folded back and the hand half-closed, with the index-finger extended toward the horizon, etc., etc.

"Facial expression is classified also in the division of oratorical art which is called gesture.

"It is very important that it should never

diverge to the point where it would interpret a sentiment contrary to the one desired to be exprest.

"It is equally essential not to adopt that impassiveness which certain novices take for a coldness in good taste.

"Orators should guard against too exaggerated facial movement, as contraction of the eyebrows, smiles when no cause for them exists, or contortions of the mouth.

"The expression of the eyes will form an object of special study; their excessive mobility, winking too frequently; all these will be so many defects which will destroy the harmony of facial expression.

"The habit of closing the eyes should be vigorously combatted, because it conceals from the audience the sentiments which the eyes are required to express.

"Staring has the same deficiency.

"It is also most undesirable always to fix the eyes on the same point; the head often leaning to the same side, it happens that a part of the audience find themselves, unconsciously, neglected by the speaker.

"For all the other parts of the face, the orator, without employing excessive gesture, which

exceeds the limits of authorized imitation, should endeavor to sketch the impressions which he describes by the aid of facial expression.

"It is designedly that we employ the word 'sketch,' for it would, indeed, be ridiculous literally to trace these impressions.

"When an orator says:

" 'Let us weep for the fate of our brothers killed by the enemy,' the whole expression of his countenance will depict sadness, but it would be perfectly ridiculous if he burst into tears.

"Also the simple sketch permits of passing very quickly from sadness to another sentiment, which would become very difficult if the impression made had been a very deep one.

"To continue the same example, we shall quote the phrase cited above, terminating it by the words: 'and let us revenge them,' and we shall understand how impossible it will be for an orator who has constrained his features to express the most profound sadness to force them to change their expression in a second to one which shall indicate savage energy contained in the words, 'let us revenge them!'

"If, on the contrary, he has simply outlined quiet sadness, it will be far easier for him, by means of an imperceptible movement, to induce

them to express the resolution dictated by the concluding words."

Passing then to the analysis of facial expression, Xanthes says:

"The eyes are the most essential feature of the face. The orator should pay special attention to their expression.

"They will express surprize, fear, indifference, or shame, according as they are wide open, half-closed, or lowered.

"If they glare under contracted eyebrows, they indicate anger; if they remain calm, while the eyebrows frown, it is a sign of calculated resolution.

"The nostrils expanded express disdain.

"The mouth opens in emotion, caused by fear or sudden surprize.

"In grief, the corners of the mouth droop.

"The lower lip extended forward indicates scorn, and sometimes ignorance.

"The movement of the head thrown back, accompanied by an elevation of the eyebrows, interprets audacity.

"Affirmation is exprest by a downward gesture of the head.

"Turned several times from one side to another, the head will indicate negation.

"The more rapid these two movements are and the oftener repeated, the more violent will be the affirmation or the negation.

"The third division of gesture, attitude, is a thing less defined than gestures.

"Attitude is a composite production, inclusive of everything which concerns gesture.

"It is the art of pleasing the eyes and charming the ears at the same time."

"An orator," says Xanthes, "should never forget that he will be judged first by his attitude.

"He presents himself before speaking, and, if his pose displeases the public, he will have a thousand times more difficulty in winning its favor.

"The moment it is a question of a discourse, gesture can be classified under three different heads.

"The attitude, which makes the first impression; the gesture which follows, and, finally, the spoken word.

"One can, therefore, understand of what utility the science of attitude may be, since it avoids being judged by the public with premature severity.

"In order to acquire a harmonious attitude,

the first of all conditions is to observe the prescribed rules as to moderation and grace in gesture.

"Afterward, it is necessary to know how *to take possession of the public;* that is, to dominate it by looking frankly into the face of the audience and by a cold reserve of pose.

"The timid never succeed in impressing an audience, because they are not sufficiently convinced of their own value.

"When mounting the rostrum, every orator who wishes to be master of his public should be impregnated with the conviction of his own superiority.

"By acting thus he will not commit an act of extreme vanity, because it is incontestable that the majority of those who have come to hear him admit this supremacy, their presence being a certain proof of this conviction; one does not incommode oneself to listen to a speaker when one is persuaded that he can not teach people anything.

"The orator should, therefore, take an attitude indicative of grace and of power. If he feels agitation, he must make a determined effort to dissemble it.

"He should wait until perfect silence reigns

before beginning to speak. In case he shall have pronounced his first words in the tumult of voices, he should repeat them, allowing an interval of a few seconds to intervene between these words and their repetition.

"One can not repeat this truth too often:

"The silence imposed by the orator is the best way to appease disorder in an auditorium.

"During his discourse, he should turn his head first to the right, then to the left, in order that every one may participate in his oration.

"He should restrict himself to the use of those gestures which explain his words.

"He should increase or diminish the volume of his voice according to the dimensions and the acoustics of the place where he is speaking.

"He should take care to express the opinions to which he gives utterance, by a moderate play of the features, and he should emphasize them by the aid of rare and graceful gestures.

"It is always better to begin a discourse slowly, and to commence it by short phrases.

"An orator ought to think of the appeal to the intelligence of his public, which is imbued with his idea in proportion as he has not treated roughly the effort to comprehend him that he exacts of his hearers.

"Cut short the exordium and go to the heart of the discourse as quickly as possible. You will have many more chances to be listened to than if you have already wearied the attention of your public by useless considerations.

"A discourse is not a lesson in rhetoric; it is a demonstration in favor of a conviction.

"For this reason, when one reaches the *essential point* of the discourse, he will do well to create in himself an enthusiasm which will be propagated among his audience, by means of the impassioned words which this ardor will dictate, and appropriate and harmonious gestures with which he will illustrate his sentences, which at this moment will become longer and above all more sonorous.

"The final gesture, like the phrase of peroration, should never be left to the chance of improvisation.

"This gesture is quite as important as the first of all.

"If the initial attitude influences the disposition of the hearers, the attitude at the termination of the discourse will remain engraved on their memory of representations; it will efface the former gestures, to leave only this one remaining.

"Understand well, we eliminate all cases of awkwardness or ridicule; however, admitting that one has had to experience them during the discourse, the attractive attitude of the peroration would obliterate them from the mind.

"Orators who wish to be listened to should not forget that they are not only bearers of speech and of thought, but also propagators of the religion of beauty."

LESSON X

SPEECH AS USED IN BUSINESS AND FAMILY LIFE

It is not only on the rostrum and at public gatherings that the art of speaking should be revealed.

It is of indisputable value when it is applied to the thousand and one conditions of daily life, in which the need of producing conviction is allied to the desire of sustaining, of consoling, yes, even of reprimanding, others.

The authority of the head of the family depends very often on the way in which he expresses himself.

A phrase badly constructed, composed of inexact statements, has often created discord between people who until then had had no other feeling than reciprocal sympathy.

It also happens that not knowing how to interpret their opinions by the use of appropriate words, many people will keep silent and allow most reprehensible acts to be committed in their

presence, which, with one word from them, would surely have been prevented.

It is impossible to estimate the number of people who lament the inability to speak with which they are affected at the moment when they wish to express their thought!

It would, however, be very easy for them to interpret these thoughts in the most accurate, if not the most brilliant, manner if they would cultivate the art of speech.

It is certainly not given to every one to depict his sentiments in well-chosen words, and elegance of language needs, as we have seen, a special and complete course of study, the application to which demands a veritable life-work.

But, if moral or material reasons prevent the achievement of this ambition in all its perfection, it is always possible to devote the time necessary to the acquisition of polished language, accompanied by harmonious gestures, expressing in a clear manner simple and sound ideas.

"There are no circumstances," says Xanthes, "in which the art of speaking does not exert a preponderant influence over the conclusion of acts.

"The young scholar who appears at ease and

speaks with elegance will win the favor of his master, rather than one of superior talent but unskilled in the art of expression."

That which was true in the time of Xanthes remains even to-day as an indisputable principle.

In modern society, in which so few places are at our disposal, relative to the number of candidates who covet them, facility of speech has become a necessity.

They are to be pitied who are not versed in this art, for they run great risk of never attaining to the position of which they are often worthy.

However, one can not complain of these positions being refused to those who disdain them without seeking to know them better, for difficulty and inelegance of speech are among the obstacles which defeat success.

The presentation of an affair, as well as of an idea, exacts a display of the powers of persuasion more or less important but certain; now conviction is only obtained by means of words proving the truth of assertions.

Is there anything more pitiable than the attitude of a man incapable of making himself understood and, on account of it, unable to convince his hearers of the opinion which he would have them adopt?

Whatever may be the affair which he proposes, if he makes his proposition clumsily and with embarrassment, no attention will be paid to his recommendations.

We see, on the contrary, schemers accomplish easily the object which they wish to achieve, in spite of the deplorable character of their purpose, because they know by their command of words how to importune those of whose sincerity they have taken advantage.

But, if the art of speaking is necessary in social life, it is not less so in home life.

"A father articulating imperfectly, and incapable of expressing his wishes correctly, will never enjoy complete authority.

"His children will feel that they are inadequately sustained by so poor an advocate, and they will smile in secret at the stupid reprimands which he has administered to them.

"He himself will feel so embarrassed because of the inefficiency of his speech that he will hesitate to make the reproach dictated by his conscience and which his voice so unskilfully interprets.

"And how many opportunities he will lose of instructing his sons by not being able to interest them!

"There are certain schools," continues the philosopher, "where the art of speaking is taught to the children at the same time as the first elements of instruction.

"The master does not admit vulgarities of language and only approves of criticisms formulated in a manner as correct as can be demanded from a child of tender age."

What a lesson for our contemporary teachers!

Children of this generation readily allow themselves to be attracted by the charm of words whose special coloring pleases their imagination, at the same time that it flatters their spirit of independence.

At first the slang of sports, then pure slang gradually swamps in the minds of the students the science of correct and elegant expressions which their professors try to inculcate in them.

The grandparents who can comprehend every thing in the habitual language of their grandchildren are becoming rarer and rarer.

Must we then scorn the illegitimate sister of pure language to the point of never borrowing from her one of those curious but brilliant expressions in which she usually clothes her ideas?

The poets of the slums have proved throughout the world that in the gutter where this un-

couth language had its birth a glimpse of heaven is sometimes perceived; it is not then forbidden the orator to emphasize his phrase by using one of these expressions, which reproduce the truth as a too realistic picture in all its barbarity would portray it; but children are poor judges of these gradations of expression, and if they have not near them the natural professor, which should be their father, they will descend to triviality while sincerely believing that they are giving evidence of the originality of their conversation.

This is why it is necessary that the head of the family should practise and preach the necessity of the art of speaking.

"The spoken words," says Xanthes, "is the vehicle of thought; it is through speech that the minds of children and of relatives are endowed with creative power.

"The projections of healthy thoughts can not be efficaciously transmitted if he who is morally responsible for them does not know how to interpret these thoughts in words, which destroy the unbalanced impulses in young minds.

"It is by speech as well as by example that we shall succeed in combating mental weakness, by substituting for it the power of the will, creator of strong resolutions."

"The art of speaking," adds the philosopher, "is also the art of gradations. By cultivating it we shall succeed very quickly in enlarging the field of the intelligence, because we shall understand how to become accustomed, little by little, to the pruning of parasitic thoughts so as to allow the initial thought to triumph.

"Those who ignore the art of speech are contented to think confusedly, and the imperfections of their resolutions are less apparent to them.

"But, being forced to express them, they quickly perceive their defects.

"Speech determines the idea and it is in seeking to represent this idea that the confusion and obscurity of their ideas will strike those who express them with difficulty."

And then the old orator insists again on the necessity of eloquence in that which concerns the circumstances of social life.

"Persuasion," he says, "is achieved by a kind of exchange of radiance, which, if it affects similarly the orator and his interlocutor, will only influence profoundly the one of the two who is the most susceptible to the penetration of this radiance."

And he adds:

"Two men, each carrying a torch, were walking one evening to meet one another; but, altho the flame of one shed a brilliant light, that of the second, imperfectly lighted, burned dimly in the darkness, so dimly that the latter was completely illuminated by the flame of the torch which the other advancing toward him was waving, while the latter was scarcely touched by the rays escaping from the smoky torch.

"The bearers of speech are like these two bearers of torches; when one of them by the force of his arguments spreads over the heart of his interlocutor the illumination of persuasion, the other, he who expresses himself in a confused way and who knows little how to separate the light of the idea from the obscure chaos of his impressions, will never succeed in diffusing light around himself which he does not understand how to produce.

"As compensation he will be disposed to permit all the lights which eloquent men dispense so generously to shine upon him, too happy if a blur does not come before his eyes as a result of this, which will prevent him from seeing within himself."

The philosopher puts us again on our guard against the misfortunes which in social life can

result from a radical or partial defect in eloquence.

"It has often happened," he says, "that a man unjustly accused may not have been able to justify himself in a satisfactory manner, for the lack of knowing how to find the right words to say.

"One day, a man from the suburbs of Athens was accused by his neighbor of having stolen a valuable ring belonging to him. He was compelled to appear before the judge, and he began by protesting his innocence, satisfied merely to deny his guilt, for the poor man was not gifted in public speaking. He limited himself from the first to the expression: 'No, it is not I.' But the neighbor was a clever speaker; he converted the judge so thoroughly to his belief that the latter, persuaded in his turn, undertook to make him acknowledge that he was guilty of the crime of which he was accused.

"Confused by these convincing phrases, surrounded by a network of proofs whose authority he was unable to contest otherwise than by persistent denial, the accused ended by proving the magic power of words, and, altho perfectly innocent, he confest.

"He confest, as much to rid himself of the

torture of responding as to succumb to the suggestion evoked by the words to which he never retorted, and which, for this very reason, ended by affecting his mind so seriously as to bring on brain-trouble.

"Happily, at this crisis something unexpected happened: the neighbor found his ring. They hastened to liberate from prison the unskilful speaker, who could not explain his confession otherwise than by the difficulty of retorting the arguments with which he was overwhelmed and the desire of escaping from the questions to which it was impossible for him to reply in an appropriate way."

The art of speaking, as well in family life as in social life, may be the starting-point of much success, and may contribute to increase the conditions of happiness.

It is, therefore, essential to cultivate it in children from the earliest age possible.

Xanthes recommends the method of recitations and there also imposes upon the head of the family the part of bearer of speech.

"The father or the patriarch," he says, "should endeavor to interest his family by narrations which he will have the children repeat, taking care to correct their unsuitable expres-

sions and initiating them into the beauties of style.

"He will eliminate vulgar words, or those which define the thought inadequately, and will try to create in these young minds thought-pictures sufficiently faithful to call forth the word that conveys them.

"If this word does not immediately suggest itself, he will call it forth by eliminating all other words which are not adequate to the idea evoked, always taking care to hold the slender attention within the limits traced by the importance of the idea."

And Xanthes, allowing the psychologist within him to speak, adds:

"Many families owe to the familiar eloquence of their head union and harmony which are the most enviable gifts in the world.

"And when, one fine evening, passing before houses concealed by the shadows of twilight, a traveler hears a man's voice relating to his attentive family some marvelous stories which sustain devotion to beauty and courage in the soul, he may stop suddenly, lay down his staff, and ask for a place among the listeners; he will be welcomed as the rules of hospitality require, for thither, where peace reigns, these two satellites gravitate—goodness and charity."

LESSON XI

SPEECH AND INSTRUCTION

"After his immortal master Socrates, the illustrious Plato," says Xanthes, "declared that the purpose of instruction was tc develop the intelligence of men by means of speech that nothing written could ever replace.

"Like these two masters, Cratylus and Socrates, he firmly believed that speech is the most authentic guide for the disciplining of man's instincts.

"Aristotle, like Plato, also declared the truth of this principle, on which rests the whole peripatetic doctrine.

"And we can not but admire how profound was his knowledge of the soul, since the principles that he inculcated in the minds of his contemporaries differed in form, according to the manner in which he presented them to all who came to hear him speak, or analyzed them with his disciples under the arcades of the Lyceum.

"The last instruction was more profound, more substantial; it was necessary to be versed

in the science of philosophy to be able to follow it in all its deductions.

"But from the moment when he addrest the common people the tone of his discourse changed; it became more brilliant, more comprehensible; pure science was abandoned to take up simplified reasoning, and each one went away carrying with him provisions of this spiritual food, which, as well as that for the body, is indispensable to the appreciation of happiness.

"Since the time of these illustrious masters, others have succeeded them, and those whose instruction was more productive, are absolutely the ones who have been inspired by this method.

"To address the crowd, to educate human intuitions, to teach men the understanding of their duties, such were the aspirations of all the pastors of the soul.

"By being more devoted to the study of man as a subjective being than as an objective entity, by spreading broadcast through the medium of speech rational ideas, orators have generated, above all else, the conception of the beautiful, of the just, and of the true, in the hearts of those whom books can never teach, since their education does not permit them to interpret thoughts through chirographical signs."

Altho modern instruction may now be universally propagated, the remarks of Xanthes have not lost any of their truth.

There are yet many who hesitate before making the effort to hear a lecture and yet consent to come to listen to an orator.

The success of lectures ought to be attributed especially to the indolence of the generality of audiences.

We say "the generality" because among the number there are those who by listening to lectures seek only an opportunity of acquiring more instruction or to verify their scientific attainments.

But the greater part of the audiences is composed of people who, if they consent to listen to dissertations during an hour on one subject would not understand how to study it more seriously.

The lecture presents still another advantage, that of eliminating a superfluity of detail, only mentioning the main facts or the fundamental principles of that which is to be expounded.

It gives to superficial minds the impression of a work all finished, of something perfected, nothing being left but to store the knowledge.

Very few among them consider the charm of

preparatory work, and there are still fewer who comprehend the utility of it.

It is none the less true that without lectures many people would never learn of things of which, thanks to this mode of instruction, they learn the existence, at least in its main outlines.

And if, among the audience, there is only one person in whom the desire for instruction has been awakened, the lecturer may rejoice and say, as did a celebrated man:

"I have not lost my day!"

"Instruction," says again the old Athenian, "always consists in reunions, where men come to take lessons, which are given to them by a master, with whom the art of speaking has always been the object of special study.

"Whether it adopts the form of classes, of dialogs, or of religious initiation, instruction always offers a vast field for oratorical demonstrations.

"Certain masters, among whom Plato should be named, used to practise oral instruction under the guise of dialogs between the professor and the pupils. It is by these lessons in dialog that he taught them that everything follows its own infinite course, and that by using all his efforts to separate general ideas from the confused mass of parasitic ideas, he made them understand the

individual differences concealing themselves under the same form.

"Eliciting their replies and their objections, he opened wide the door of thought whose lights illumined the minds of those who were prepared to step over the threshold."

And Xanthes adds these prophetic words:

"Those were the true priests of the art of speech, placed at the disposal of creative thought, for the great shadow of Socrates hovered over them, as it still hovers over us, and as it will hover over philosophy for all time."

Many forms of rhetoric have passed out of use, but the art of oratory is more than ever in vogue at this moment.

Its supremacy must be attributed to the hurried life which we lead and which gives paramount importance to oral instruction, by reason of its relative rapidity.

Christianity has largely contributed to the development of eloquence, and many religious speakers can pass for masters in oratory.

It is also an opportunity for instruction in a philosophy less material, less free from submission, but quite as profound as that of rhetoricians.

Many also are the politicians, whose speeches

are inspired by the defense of public causes, and are veritable classes of political teaching.

With many among them the art of speech is interpreted by an argumentative debate, whose concise arguments are prepared so that they will produce conviction.

Some others, on the contrary, derive their principal effects from the statement of certain abuses, the recital of which causes all the noble sentiments of the heart to rise.

Under the impulse of the emotion which moves them, eloquence bursts forth spontaneously, and, like the contemporaries of Xanthes, whom the love of a noble cause brought to the Agora to teach there, near to the stone consecrated to oaths, respect for laws and for property, our political men of to-day teach us, in a flow of noble phrases and of convincing words, respect for the laws promulgated by modern civilization with the idea of combating our instincts and curbing our appetites.

But it is not given to every one to manifest noble thoughts before an audience of his own quality.

This is what the Athenian orator foresees when he says:

"There are other orators whose mission is all

the more meritorious because it is more obscure.

"These latter do not terminate their speeches amid the din of applause; they have no disciples who go about singing their praises; however, their instruction is more valuable because it is addrest to the as yet unformed minds of children, which, like wax, are fitted to receive all impressions without discrimination.

"We mean the unknown masters, who teach little children during their first years.

"A special eloquence is necessary for them.

"It is composed of gentleness, firmness, and unconscious persuasion.

"It should be decked with flowers as a garden, and solid as iron.

"It has not the right to wander in the domain of the hypothesis, nor in the seductive paths of imagination.

"Effects are not its lot. It does not attract by its brilliancy, but by a slow and minute attention to the smallest detail.

"If the orator, dominating the crowd by the sonority of his phrases and the enthusiasm of his emotions, is sometimes called a leader of men, the master of children will never be other than a shepherd of souls.

"But what care must be taken to preserve

these tender minds from the approach of the wild beasts who seek to devour them—hypocrisy, falsehood, and treachery.

"Even gentle illusion should be included among the number of enemies which should be banished.

"It is because of having esteemed it too highly that so many young people, when reaching the age of manhood, belittle life, having refused to recognize its realities, absorbed as they have been in the false smile of illusion, which, at the moment when they thought to seize it, disappeared while calling to them to follow it."

Things have changed very little since the far distant epoch of which the Athenian philosopher speaks.

In our day the task of the teacher, everywhere thankless, still is called that of a shepherd of souls.

The appetite for living which produces so many fine and strong resolutions can be a detestable counsellor, if from infancy a rational and persuasive instruction has not penetrated these young souls, demonstrating to them the principles of good and justice in opposition to other ideas, whose brilliancy masks profound perfidy.

This is why those who direct children ought to be versed in the art of speech.

He alone will know how to inspire the words proper to sow in young souls the idea endowed with creative power, first in the form of narrations, then of counsels, and, finally, of instruction, otherwise conviction, generated by all the means which speech suggests to those who have devoted themselves to this art.

LESSON XII

THE POWER OF THE VOICE OVER THE FEELINGS

Since the most ancient times the part played by the orator has been equally important in the organization of society and in family life.

All generous acts and all heroic actions have been inspired by discourses.

"It was Solon," says Xanthes, "who, scorning the menace of death threatening all the defenders of Salamis, mounted the stone of proclamations, demonstrating to the people what would be the shame of him of whom it could be said later, 'This is a man of Attica who has deserted Salamis!'

"His oratory aroused the enthusiasm of the Athenian youth, who rose crying: 'Let us go to reconquer Salamis!'

"The decree containing the menace of death was repealed, and the Athenians were able to win back Salamis from the Megarians, who had taken it away from them.'

History is rich in examples of this kind.

Since the beginning of our era men have appeared who by virtue of speech have engendered formidable resolutions.

The prophets have had unlimited power over the masses, and their predictions have often reversed Fate.

The propagation of Christian teaching and the various activities which have resulted from it—are they due to any other influence than that of speech?

It was by virtue of his discourses that Mohammed, the young, obscure Arabian, taught first to his kinsmen, then his disciples, afterward to the faithful, and lastly the masses, the belief in a doctrine which responded to their aspirations.

It is even now cradled in the magic of words, evoking seductive ideas, that the Mussulmans, in the cafés or public halls, squat for hours to listen to a teller of stories.

According to the teachings of this great leader of souls, as Mohammed was, he promises to these wanderers of the burning desert a future life peopled with refreshing visions; at the sound of his words the springs sing, the exuberant foliage of the spreading branches casts its shadows, beds made of silken stuffs make them forget the

dryness of the matting on which they are actually lying, and, to gain these miracles of the hereafter, they are, as were their far-away ancestors, ready to rise in a mass and to run in the face of death, which alone can place them in possession of them.

The epic poem of the Crusaders, had it any other origin than the cry of a monk coming at the close of a discourse, in which the will of the Almighty was affirmed in a concise and definite phrase?

How much blood these three words caused to be shed! How many noble deeds they instigated! How much devotion is due to them!

How many efforts have been successful by virtue of their power!

And in contemporary life do we not all the time assist in the triumph of speech?

Take a lawyer who knows how to influence the judges to the extent of dragging from them an acquittal, when, in spite of all the proofs of guilt, he has been able to sow the seeds of doubt in their minds.

At times, however, uncertainty can not be produced; then, at the passionate appeal of the defender, pity arises and holds out its hands to clasp those whose mission is to punish.

Immediately, another doubt enters their mind: Have they the right to be severe?

This guilty one whom they are going to strike, is he not himself a victim? If the same fate had caused them to be born in the same destitution, would they have been better than he?

Under the dominating influence of this reasoning, the agony of a moral injustice restrains them; their hearts melt, and the revengeful punishment is changed into a restraint which may become a redemption.

"Speech," says Xanthes again, "is like the seed which is confided to the earth.

"It adopts divers forms of germination, but it always sprouts.

"Sometimes, as with the seed sleeping during all the bad season that it may bear fruit only in the spring, so is speech sleeping in the heart of man as if it had not been pronounced; but, like the seed, it germinates slowly and soon appears, thanks to the favorable fertilization of eloquence, under the form of an action or of an idea which are its progeny.

"In olden times a word sufficed to make a resolution burst forth and to let loose an effective ardor which was resolved into spontaneous determination.

"But speech is never sterile. It is sometimes productive of reprehensible actions.

"There lies the reason why the office of the orator is one of the most magnificent that one can wish to fill.

"As they wish, rye-grass or good grain may grow in the fields where they sow their seed.

"As they wish, also, souls are closed to evil sentiments or are opened to dangerous counsels, for the orator is not only a dispenser of words, he is equally a generator of ideas.

"It is he who is responsible not only for making them bloom, but also for modifying their growth and determining their species.

"It is under the influence of sound words that the supremacy of the passions is diminished, giving place to reason, which puts to flight unhealthy suggestions and permits charitable thoughts to be developed."

And the philosopher demonstrates to us the truth of his assertions when he says:

"From infancy, man is subject to the influence of speech.

"The remonstrances and the exhortations of parents, the stories with which our tender years are beguiled, can have considerable bearing on the trend of our life.

"Certain men maintain an attitude of fear throughout their existence as a result of the reproaches with which they were crusht on every occasion from the earliest age.

"Others, on the contrary, are able to estimate their own worth, because the just observations and the approbation of their instructors has inculcated faith in them.

"There are those who remember their nurse's stories so vividly that, altho growing up strong and sensible, they can not efface from their thoughts the visions of fantoms, whose existence, nevertheless, their reason denies.

"With certain others we observe the growth of opposite mental qualities arising from the contradictory doctrines which the lessons of various teachers have instilled in them.

"We see weak minds become enthusiastic under the beneficial influence of an energetic discourse, and, bathed in the flow of impressions accelerating the transformation of thought, change into heroes whom posterity admires."

We must, then, conclude with Xanthes that at every age speech is the element determining actions, whether it be addrest to the individual soul or whether it stir the soul of society which sleeps in each one of us.

It is the most active factor of happiness; it is also the surest agent of adversity, for according to the turn which advice gives to our resolutions they may become subjects of joy or a source of regret as poignant as useless.

There is another influence which the wise Xanthes points out to us with the delicacy of sentiments which renders so attractive the doctrine of this exact thinker:

"The need of creating sympathy," he says, "inspires all men with words which adopt the form of their aspirations.

"Strong and well-balanced, solid and cordial, when they interpret friendship they become apathetic or ardent, seductive flatterers, and tender, elevated, or agitated if they wish to evoke love.

"Are they always sincere?

"Alas! falsehood is the worm which slips too easily into the golden apple of eloquence.

"There is, however, a sure way of never being the victim of its ravages; that is, to work oneself in order to produce perfect fruits, whose delicate flavor and subtle perfume will be united to qualities more substantial and more nutritious.

"It is not sufficient to think of nourishment

for the body; that of the soul ought to be specially cultivated; and an orator should never forget that, if the flowers usually precede the fruit, there are certain trees, in great demand, which have resplendent bulbs, together with calices whose beauty of form vies with that of their perfume.

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